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THE
ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

BY
ALEXANDER POPE.

WITH
A BEAUTIFUL FRONTISPIECE.

VOL. II.

CHISWICK:
PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM,
SOLD BY THOMAS TEGG, CHEAPSIDE;
R. JENNINGS, POULTRY, LONDON;
AND R. GRIFFIN AND CO. GLASGOW.

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TRANSLATED BY
A. POPE, ESQ.

VOL. 2



Drawn by Wastall

Engraved by Heath

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SEPT. 1820

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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Arrival of Ulysses in Ithaca.

Ulysses takes his leave of Alcinous and Arete, and embarks in the evening. Next morning the ship arrives at Ithaca; where the sailors, as Ulysses is yet sleeping, lay him on the shore with all his treasures. On their return, Neptune changes their ship into a rock. In the mean time Ulysses, awaking, knows not his native Ithaca, by reason of a mist which Pallas had cast round him. He breaks into loud lamentations; till the goddess, appearing to him in the form of a shepherd, discovers the country to him, and points out the particular places. He then tells a feigned story of his adventures, upon which she manifests herself, and they consult together of the measures to be taken to destroy the suitors. To conceal his return, and disguise his person the more effectually, she changes him into the figure of an old beggar.

He ceas'd ; but left so pleasing on their ear
His voice, that listening still they seem'd to hear.
A pause of silence hush'd the shady rooms :
The grateful conference then the king resumes :
 ' Whatever toils the great Ulysses pass'd,
Beneath this happy roof they end at last ;
No longer now from shore to shore to roam,
Smooth seas, and gentle winds, invite him home.
But hear me, princes ! whom these walls enclose,
For whom my chanter sings, and goblet flows
With wine unmix'd (an honour due to age,
To cheer the grave, and warm the poet's rage) :
' Though labour'd gold and many a dazzling vest
Lie heap'd already for our godlike guest ;

Without new treasures let him not remove,
Large, and expressive of the public love:
Each peer a tripod, each a vase bestow,
A general tribute, which the state shall owe.'

This sentence pleas'd: then all their steps address'd
To separate mansions, and retir'd to rest.

Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
And shed her sacred light along the skies.
Down to the haven and the ships in haste
They bore the treasures, and in safety plac'd.
The king himself the vases rang'd with care:
Then bade his followers to the feast repair.
A victim ox beneath the sacred hand
Of great Alcinous falls, and stains the sand.
To Jove the' eternal (power above all powers!
Who wings the winds, and darkens heaven with
showers),

The flames ascend: till evening they prolong
The rites, more sacred made by heavenly song:
For in the midst, with public honours grac'd,
Thy lyre divine, Demodocus! was plac'd.
All, but Ulysses, heard with fix'd delight:
He sat, and ey'd the sun, and wish'd the night;
Slow seem'd the sun to move, the hours to roll,
His native home deep imagin'd in his soul.
As the tir'd ploughman spent with stubborn toil,
Whose oxen long have torn the furrow'd soil,
Sees with delight the sun's declining ray,
When home, with feeble knees, he bends his way
To late repast (the day's hard labour done):
So to Ulysses welcome set the sun.

Then instant, to Alcinous and the rest
(The Scherian states) he turn'd, and thus address'd:

'O thou, the first in merit and command!
And you, the peers and princes of the land!
May every joy be yours! nor this the least,
When due libation shall have crown'd the feast,
Safe to my home to send your happy guest.
Complete are now the bounties you have given,
Be all those bounties but confirm'd by heaven!
So may I find, when all my wanderings cease,
My consort blameless, and my friends in peace.

On you be every bliss; and every day,
In home-felt joys, delighted roll away;
Yourselves, your wives, your long-descending race,
May every god enrich with every grace!
Sure fix'd on virtue may your nation stand,
And public evil never touch the land!

His words well weigh'd, the general voice approv'd
Benign, and instant his dismissal mov'd.
The monarch to Pontonous gave the sign,
To fill the goblet high with rosy wine:
'Great Jove the father first (he cried) implore;
Then send the stranger to his native shore.'

The luscious wine the' obedient herald brought;
Around the mansion flow'd the purple draught:
Each from his seat to each immortal pours,
Whom glory circles in the' Olympian bowers.
Ulysses sole with air majestic stands,
The bowl presenting to Arete's hands;
Then thus: 'O queen, farewell! be still possess'd
Of dear remembrance, blessing still and bless'd!
Till age and death shall gently call thee hence:
(Sure fate of every mortal excellence!)
Farewell! and joys successive ever spring
To thee, to thine, the people, and the king!'

Thus he; then parting prints the sandy shore
To the fair port: a herald march'd before,
Sent by Alcinous: of Arete's train
Three chosen maids attend him to the main;
This does a tunic and white vest convey,
A various casket that, of rich inlay,
And bread and wine the third. The cheerful mates
Safe in the hollow poop dispose the cates:
Upon the deck, soft painted robes they spread,
With linen cover'd, for the hero's bed.
He climb'd the lofty stern; then gently press'd
The swelling couch, and lay compos'd to rest.

Now plac'd in order, the Phæacian train
Their cables loose, and launch into the main:
At once they bend, and strike their equal oars,
And leave the sinking hills, and lessening shores.
While on the deck the chief in silence lies,
And pleasing slumbers steal upon his eyes.

As fiery coursers in the rapid race,
Urg'd by fierce drivers through the dusty space,
Toss their high heads, and scour along the plain;
So mounts the bounding vessel o'er the main.
Back to the stern the parted billows flow,
And the black ocean foams and roars below.

Thus with spread sails the winged galley flies;
Less swift an eagle cuts the liquid skies:
Divine Ulysses was her sacred load,
A man in wisdom equal to a god!
Much danger, long and mighty toils he bore,
In storms by sea, and combats on the shore;
All which soft sleep now banish'd from his breast,
Wrapp'd in a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest.

But when the morning star with early ray
Flam'd in the front of heaven, and promis'd day;
Like distant clouds the mariner describes,
Fair Ithaca's emerging hills arise.
Far from the town a spacious port appears,
Sacred to Phorcy's power, whose name it bears:
Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,
The roaring wind's tempestuous rage restrain;
Within, the waves in softer murmurs glide,
And ships secure without their halsers ride.
High at the head a branching olive grows,
And crowns the pointed cliffs with shady boughs.
Beneath, a gloomy grotto's cool recess
Delights the Nereids of the neighbouring seas;
Where bowls and urns were form'd of living stone,
And massy beams in native marble shone;
On which the labours of the nymphs were roll'd,
Their webs divine of purple mix'd with gold.
Within the cave, the clustering bees attend
Their waxen works, or from the roof depend.
Perpetual waters o'er the pavement glide;
Two marble doors unfold on either side;
Sacred the south, by which the gods descend,
But mortals enter at the northern end.

Thither they bent, and haul'd their ship to land
(The crooked keel divides the yellow sand);
Ulysses sleeping on his couch they bore,
And gently plac'd him on the rocky shore.

His treasures next, Alcinous' gifts, they laid
In the wild olive's unfrequented shade,
Secure from theft: then launch'd the bark again,
Resum'd their oars, and measur'd back the main.

Nor yet forgot old Ocean's dread supreme
The vengeance vow'd for eyeless Polypheme.
Before the throne of mighty Jove he stood;
And sought the secret counsels of the god.

'Shall then no more, O sire of gods! be mine
The rights and honours of a power divine?
Scorn'd e'en by man, and (oh severe disgrace)
By soft Phæacians, my degenerate race!
Against yon destin'd head in vain I swore,
And menac'd vengeance, ere he reach'd his shore;
To reach his natal shore was thy decree;
Mild I obey'd, for who shall war with thee?
Behold him landed, careless and asleep,
From all the' eluded dangers of the deep!
Lo, where he lies, amidst a shining store
Of brass, rich garments, and refulgent ore;
And bears triumphant to his native isle
A prize more worth than Ilion's noble spoil.'

To whom the father of the' immortal powers,
Who swells the clouds, and gladdens earth with showers:
'Can mighty Neptune thus of man complain?
Neptune, tremendous o'er the boundless main!
Rever'd and awful e'en in heaven's abodes,
Ancient and great! a god above the gods!
If that low race offend thy power divine,
(Weak, daring creatures!) is not vengeance thine?
Go, then, the guilty at thy will chastise.'

He said: the shaker of the earth replies:

'This then I doom; to fix the gallant ship
A mark of vengeance on the sable deep:
To warn the thoughtless self-confiding train,
No more unlicens'd thus to brave the main.
Full in their port a shady hill shall rise,
If such thy will.'—'We will it, (Jove replies)
E'en when with transport blackening all the strand,
The swarming people hail their ship to land,
Fix her for ever, a memorial stone:
Still let her seem to sail, and seem alone;

The trembling crowds shall see the sudden shade
Of whelming mountains overhang their head!

With that, the god whose earthquakes rock the ground,
Fierce to Phæacia cross'd the vast profound.

Swift as a swallow sweeps the liquid way,

The winged pinnacle shot along the sea.

The god arrests her with a sudden stroke,

And roots her down an everlasting rock.

Aghast the Scherians stand in deep surprise;

All press to speak, all question with their eyes.

What hands unseen the rapid bark restrain!

And yet it swims, or seems to swim, the main!

Thus they, unconscious of the deed divine:

Till great Alcinous, rising, own'd the sign.

‘Behold the long-predestin’d day! (he cries)

O certain faith of ancient prophecies!

These ears have heard my royal sire disclose

A dreadful story, big with future woes;

How, mov’d with wrath that careless we convey

Promiscuous every guest to every bay,

Stern Neptune rag’d; and how by his command

Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand;

(A monument of wrath) and mound on mound

Should hide our walls, or whelm beneath the ground.

‘The fates have follow’d as declar’d the seer.

Be humbled, nations! and your monarch hear:

No more unlicens’d brave the deeps, no more

With every stranger pass from shore to shore;

On angry Neptune now for mercy call:

To his high name let twelve black oxen fall.

So may the god reverse his purpos’d will,

Nor o’er our city hang the dreadful hill.’

The monarch spoke: they trembled and obey’d,

Forth on the sands the victim oxen led:

The gather’d tribes before the altars stand,

And chiefs and rulers, a majestic band.

The king of ocean all the tribes implore;

The blazing altars redden all the shore.

Meanwhile Ulysses in his country lay,

Releas’d from sleep, and round him might survey

The solitary shore, and rolling sea.

Yet had his mind through tedious absence lost

The dear remembrance of his native coast;

Besides, Minerva, to secure her care,
Diffus'd around a veil of thicken'd air:
For so the gods ordain'd to keep unseen
His royal person from his friends and queen;
Till the proud suitors for their crimes afford
An ample vengeance to their injur'd lord.

Now all the land another prospect bore,
Another port appear'd, another shore,
And long-continued ways, and winding floods,
And unknown mountains, crown'd with unknown woods.
Pensive and slow, with sudden grief oppress'd
The king arose, and beat his careful breast;
Cast a long look o'er all the coast and main,
And sought, around, his native realm in vain:
Then with erected eyes stood fix'd in woe,
And as he spoke, the tears began to flow.

'Ye gods! (he cried) upon what barren coast,
In what new region, is Ulysses toss'd?
Possess'd by wild barbarians, fierce in arms?
Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms?
Where shall this treasure now in safety lie?
And whither, whither its sad owner fly?
Ah, why did I Alcinous' grace implore?
Ah, why forsake Phæacia's happy shore?
Some juster prince perhaps had entertain'd,
And safe restor'd me to my native land.
Is this the promis'd, long-expected coast,
And this the faith Phæacia's rulers boast?
Oh righteous gods! of all the great, how few
Are just to heaven, and to their promise true!
But he, the power to whose all-seeing eyes
The deeds of men appear without disguise,
'Tis his alone to' avenge the wrongs I bear,
For still the oppress'd are his peculiar care.
To count these presents, and from thence to prove
Their faith, is mine: the rest belongs to Jove.'

Then on the sands he rang'd his wealthy store,
The gold, the vests, the tripods, number'd o'er:
All these he found, but still, in error lost,
Disconsolate he wanders on the coast,
Sighs for his country, and laments again
To the deaf rocks, and hoarse-resounding main.

When lo! the guardian goddess of the wise,
Celestial Pallas, stood before his eyes;
In show a youthful swain, of form divine,
Who seem'd descended from some princely line;
A graceful robe her slender body dress'd,
Around her shoulders flew the waving vest,
Her decent hand a shining javelin bore,
And painted sandals on her feet she wore.
To whom the king: 'Whoe'er of human race
Thou art, that wand'rest in this desert place!
With joy to thee, as to some god, I bend,
To thee my treasures and myself commend.
O tell a wretch in exile doom'd to stray,
What air I breathe, what country I survey?
The fruitful continent's extremest bound,
Or some fair isle which Neptune's arms surround?'
'From what fair clime (said she) remote from fame
Arriv'st thou here, a stranger to our name?
Thou seest an island, not to those unknown
Whose hills are brighten'd by the rising sun,
Nor those that plac'd beneath his utmost reign
Behold him sinking in the western main.
The rugged soil allows no level space
For flying chariots, or the rapid race;
Yet not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:
The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
And clustering grapes afford a generous juice:
Woods crown our mountains, and in every grove
The bounding goats and frisking heifers rove:
Soft rains and kindly dews refresh the field,
And rising springs eternal verdure yield.
E'en to those shores is Ithaca renown'd,
Where Troy's majestic ruins strow the ground.'
At this, the chief with transport was possess'd,
His panting heart exulted in his breast;
Yet well dissembling his untimely joys,
And veiling truth in plausible disguise,
Thus, with an air sincere, in fiction bold,
His ready tale the' inventive hero told.
'Oft have I heard in Crete this island's name;
For 'twas from Crete, my native soil, I came;

Self-banish'd thence. I sail'd before the wind,
And left my children and my friends behind.
From fierce Idomeneus' revenge I flew,
Whose son, the swift Orsilochus, I slew :
(With brutal force he seiz'd my Trojan prey,
Due to the toils of many a bloody day)
Unseen I scap'd ; and favour'd by the night,
In a Phœnician vessel took my flight,
For Pyle or Elis bound : but tempests toss'd,
And raging billows drove us on your coast.
In dead of night an unknown port we gain'd,
Spent with fatigue, and slept secure on land.
But ere the rosy morn renew'd the day,
While in the' embrace of pleasing sleep I lay,
Sudden, invited by auspicious gales,
They land my goods, and hoist their flying sails.
Abandon'd here, my fortune I deplore,
A hapless exile on a foreign shore.'

Thus while he spoke, the blue-eyed maid began
With pleasing smiles to view the godlike man :
Then chang'd her form ; and now, divinely bright,
Jove's heavenly daughter stood confess'd to sight :
Like a fair virgin in her beauty's bloom,
Skill'd in the' illustrious labours of the loom.

' O still the same Ulysses ! she rejoin'd,
In useful craft successfully refin'd !
Artful in speech, in action, and in mind !
Suffic'd it not, that, thy long labours pass'd,
Secure, thou seest thy native shore at last ?
But this to me ? who, like thyself, excel
In arts of counsel, and dissembling well.
To me, whose wit exceeds the powers divine,
No less than mortals are surpass'd by thine.
Know'st thou not me ? who made thy life my care,
Through ten years' wandering, and through ten years'
Who taught thee arts, Alcinous to persuade, [war ;
To raise his wonder, and engage his aid ;
And now appear, thy treasures to protect,
Conceal thy person, thy designs direct,
And tell what more thou must from fate expect :
Domestic woes far heavier to be borne !
The pride of fools, and slaves' insulting scorn.

But thou be silent, nor reveal thy state ;
Yield to the force of unresisted fate,
And bear unmov'd the wrongs of base mankind,
The last, and hardest, conquest of the mind.'

' Goddess of Wisdom ! (Ithacus replies),
He who discerns thee must be truly wise,
So seldom view'd, and ever in disguise !
When the bold Argives led their warring powers
Against proud Ilion's well-defended towers,
Ulysses was thy care, celestial maid !
Grac'd with thy sight, and favour'd with thy aid.
But when the Trojan piles in ashes lay,
And bound for Greece we plough'd the watery way ;
Our fleet dispers'd and driven from coast to coast,
Thy sacred presence from that hour I lost :
Till I beheld thy radiant form once more,
And heard thy counsels on Phæacia's shore.
But, by the' almighty author of thy race,
Tell me, O tell, is this my native place ?
For much, I fear, long tracts of land and sea
Divide this coast from distant Ithaca ;
The sweet delusion kindly you impose,
To sooth my hopes, and mitigate my woes.'

Thus he. The blue-eyed goddess thus replies :
' How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise !
Who, vers'd in fortune, fear the flattering show,
And taste not half the bliss the gods bestow.
The more shall Pallas aid thy just desires,
And guard the wisdom which herself inspires.
Others, long absent from their native place,
Straight seek their home, and fly with eager pace
To their wives' arms, and children's dear embrace.
Not thus Ulysses : he decrees to prove
His subjects' faith, and queen's suspected love ;
Who mourn'd her lord twice ten revolving years,
And wastes the days in grief, the nights in tears.
But Pallas knew (thy friends and navy lost)
Once more 'twas given thee to behold thy coast :
Yet how could I with adverse fate engage,
And mighty Neptune's unrelenting rage ?
Now lift thy longing eyes, while I restore
The pleasing prospect of thy native shore.

Behold the port of Phorcys! fenc'd around
With rocky mountains, and with olives crown'd.
Behold the gloomy grot! whose cool recess
Delights the Nereids of the neighbouring seas:
Whose now-neglected altars, in thy reign
Blush'd with the blood of sheep and oxen slain.
Behold! where Neritus the clouds divides,
And shakes the waving forests on his sides.'

So spake the goddess, and the prospect clear'd,
The mists dispers'd, and all the coast appear'd.
The king with joy confess'd his place of birth,
And on his knees salutes his mother earth:
Then, with his suppliant hands upheld in air,
Thus to the sea-green sisters sends his pray'r:

'All hail! ye virgin daughters of the main!
Ye streams, beyond my hopes beheld again!
To you once more your own Ulysses bows;
Attend his transports, and receive his vows!
If Jove prolong my days, and Pallas crown
The growing virtues of my youthful son,
To you shall rites divine be ever paid,
And grateful offerings on your altars laid.'

Then thus Minerva: 'From that anxious breast
Dismiss those cares, and leave to heaven the rest.
Our task be now thy treasur'd stores to save,
Deep in the close recesses of the cave:
Then future means consult'—she spoke, and trod
The shady grot, that brighten'd with the god.
The closest caverns of the grot she sought;
The gold, the brass, the robes, Ulysses brought;
These in the secret gloom the chief dispos'd;
The entrance with a rock the goddess clos'd.

Now, seated in the olive's sacred shade,
Confer the hero and the martial maid.
The goddess of the azure eyes began:
'Son of Laertes! much-experienc'd man!
The suitor-train thy earliest care demand,
Of that luxurious race to rid the land:
Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen,
And proud addresses to the matchless queen.
But she thy absence mourns from day to day,
And inly bleeds, and silent wastes away:

Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.'

To this Ulysses: 'O celestial maid!
Prais'd be thy counsel, and thy timely aid:
Else had I seen my native walls in vain,
Like great Atrides just restor'd and slain.
Vouchsafe the means of vengeance to debate,
And plan with all thy arts the scene of fate.
Then, then be present, and my soul inspire,
As when we wrapp'd Troy's heaven-built walls in fire.
Though leagued against me hundred heroes stand,
Hundreds shall fall, if Pallas aid my hand.'

She answer'd: 'In the dreadful day of fight
Know, I am with thee, strong in all my might.
If thou but equal to thyself be found,
What gasping numbers then shall press the ground!
What human victims stain the feastful floor!
How wide the pavements float with guilty gore!
It fits thee now to wear a dark disguise,
And secret walk, unknown to mortal eyes.
For this, my hand shall wither every grace,
And every elegance of form and face,
O'er thy smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread,
Turn hoar the auburn honours of thy head,
Disfigure every limb with coarse attire,
And in thy eyes extinguish all the fire;
Add all the wants and the decays of life,
Estrange thee from thy own, thy son, thy wife;
From the loath'd object every sight shall turn,
And the blind suitors their destruction scorn.

'Go, first, the master of thy herds to find,
True to his charge, a loyal swain and kind:
For thee he sighs; and to the royal heir,
And chaste Penelope, extends his care.
At the Coracian rock he now resides,
Where Arethusa's sable water glides;
The sable water and the copious mast
Swell the fat herd; luxuriant, large repast!
With him, rest peaceful in the rural cell,
And all you ask his faithful tongue shall tell.
Me into other realms my cares convey,
To Sparta, still with female beauty gay:

For know, to Sparta thy lov'd offspring came,
'To learn thy fortunes from the voice of fame.'

At this, the father, with a father's care:
'Must he too suffer, he, O goddess! bear
Of wanderings and of woes a wretched share?
Through the wild ocean plough the dangerous way,
And leave his fortunes and his house a prey?
Why wouldst not thou, oh all-enlighten'd mind
Inform him certain, and protect him, kind?'

To whom Minerva: 'Be thy soul at rest;
And know, whatever heaven ordains, is best.
To fame I sent him, to acquire renown:
To other regions is his virtue known.
Secure he sits, near great Atrides plac'd;
With friendships strengthen'd, and with honours grac'd.
But lo! an ambush waits his passage o'er;
Fierce foes insidious intercept the shore:
In vain! far sooner all the murderous brood
This injur'd land shall fatten with their blood.'

She spake, then touch'd him with her powerful wand:
The skin shrunk up, and wither'd at her hand:
A swift old age o'er all his members spread;
A sudden frost was sprinkled on his head;
Nor longer in the heavy eyeball shin'd
The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.
His robe, which spots indelible besmear,
In rags dishonest flutters with the air:
A stag's torn hide is lap'd around his reins;
A rugged staff his trembling hand sustains;
And at his side a wretched scrip was hung,
Wide-patch'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
So look'd the chief, so mov'd! to mortal eyes
Object uncouth! a man of miseries!
While Pallas, cleaving the wide fields of air,
To Sparta flies, Telemachus her care.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIV.

ARGUMENT.

The Conversation with Eumæus.

Ulysses arrives in disguise at the house of Eumæus, where he is received, entertained, and lodged, with the utmost hospitality. The several discourses of that faithful old servant, with the feigned story told by Ulysses to conceal himself, and other conversations on various subjects, take up this entire book.

BUT he, deep musing, o'er the mountains stray'd
Through mazy thickets of the woodland shade,
And cavern'd ways, the shaggy coast along,
With cliffs and nodding forests overhung.
Eumæus at his silvan lodge he sought,
A faithful servant, and without a fault.
Ulysses found him busied, as he sat
Before the threshold of his rustic gate ;
Around the mansion in a circle shone
A rural portico of rugged stone :
(In absence of his lord, with honest toil
His own industrious hands had rais'd the pile)
The wall was stone from neighbouring quarries borne,
Encircled with a fence of native thorn,
And strong with pales, by many a weary stroke
Of stubborn labour hewn from heart of oak ;
Frequent and thick. Within the space were rear'd
Twelve ample cells, the lodgments of his herd.
Full fifty pregnant females each contain'd ;
The males without (a smaller race) remain'd ;

Doom'd to supply the suitor's wasteful feast,
A stock by daily luxury decreas'd ;
Now scarce four hundred left. These to defend,
Four savage dogs, a watchful guard, attend.
Here sat Eumæus, and his cares applied
To form strong buskins of well-season'd hide.
Of four assistants who his labour share,
Three now were absent on the rural care ;
The fourth drove victims to the suitor-train :
But he, of ancient faith, a simple swain,
Sigh'd, while he furnish'd the luxurious board,
And wearied heaven with wishes for his lord.

Soon as Ulysses near the' enclosure drew,
With open mouths the furious mastiffs flew :
Down sat the sage ; and cautious to withstand,
Let fall the' offensive truncheon from his hand.
Sudden the master runs ; aloud he calls ;
And from his hasty hand the leather falls ;
With showers of stones he drives them far away ;
The scattering dogs around at distance bay.

' Unhappy stranger ! (thus the faithful swain
Began with accents gracious and humane)
What sorrow had been mine, if at my gate
Thy reverend age had met a shameful fate ?
Enough of woes already have I known ;
Enough my master's sorrows and my own.
While here (ungrateful task !) his herds I feed,
Ordain'd for lawless rioters to bleed ;
Perhaps, supported at another's board,
Far from his country roams my hapless lord ;
Or sigh'd in exile forth his latest breath,
Now cover'd with the' eternal shade of death !

' But enter this my lonely roof, and see
Our woods not void of hospitality :
Then tell me whence thou art ? and what the share
Of woes and wanderings thou wert born to bear ?'

He said ; and seconding the kind request,
With friendly step precedes his unknown guest ;
A shaggy goat's soft hide beneath him spread,
And with fresh rushes heap'd an ample bed.
Joy touch'd the hero's tender soul, to find
So just reception from a heart so kind :

‘ And oh, ye gods ! with all your blessings grace
(He thus broke forth) this friend of human race !’

The swain replied : ‘ It never was our guise
To slight the poor, or aught humane despise ;
For Jove unfolds our hospitable door,
’Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor.
Little, alas ! is all the good I can ;
A man oppress’d, dependent, yet a man :
Accept such treatment as a swain affords,
Slave to the insolence of youthful lords !
Far hence is by unequal gods remov’d
That man of bounties, loving and belov’d !
To whom whate’er his slave enjoys is ow’d,
And more, had fate allow’d, had been bestow’d ;
But fate condemn’d him to a foreign shore ;
Much have I sorrow’d, but my master more.
Now cold he lies, to death’s embrace resign’d :
Ah, perish Helen ! perish all her kind !
For whose curs’d cause, in Agamemnon’s name,
He trod so fatally the paths of fame.’

His vest succinct then girding round his waist,
Forth rush’d the swain with hospitable haste,
Straight to the lodgments of his herd he run,
Where the fat porkers slept beneath the sun ;
Of two, his cutlass launch’d the spouting blood ;
These quarter’d, sing’d, and fix’d on forks of wood,
All hasty on the hissing coals he threw ;
And, smoking, back the tasteful viands drew,
Broachers and all ; then on the board display’d
The ready meal, before Ulysses laid,
With flour imbrown’d ; next mingled wine yet new,
And luscious as the bee’s nectareous dew :
Then sat companion of the friendly feast,
With open look ; and thus bespoke his guest :

‘ Take with free welcome what our hands prepare,
Such food as falls to simple servants’ share ;
The best our lords consume ; those thoughtless peers,
Rich without bounty, guilty without fears !
Yet sure the gods their impious acts detest,
And honour justice and the righteous breast.
Pirates and conquerors, of harden’d mind,
The foes of peace, and scourges of mankind,

To whom offending men are made a prey
When Jove in vengeance gives a land away;
E'en these, when of their ill-got spoils possess'd,
Find sure tormentors in the guilty breast;
Some voice of God close whispering from within,
"Wretch! this is villany, and this is sin."
But these, no doubt, some oracle explore,
That tells the great Ulysses is no more.
Hence springs their confidence, and from our sighs
Their rapine strengthens, and their riots rise:
Constant as Jove the night and day bestows,
Bleeds a whole hecatomb, a vintage flows.
None match'd this hero's wealth, of all who reign
O'er the fair islands of the neighbouring main,
Nor all the monarchs whose far-dreaded sway
The wide-extended continents obey:
First on the main land, of Ulysses' breed
Twelve herds, twelve flocks, on ocean's margin feed;
As many stalls for shaggy goats are rear'd;
As many lodgments for the tusky herd;
Those foreign keepers guard: and here are seen
Twelve herds of goats that grace our utmost green;
To native pastors is their charge assign'd;
And mine the care to feed the bristly kind:
Each day the fattest bleeds of either herd,
All to the suitors' wasteful board preferr'd.'

Thus he, benevolent: his unknown guest
With hunger keen devours the savoury feast;
While schemes of vengeance ripen in his breast.
Silent and thoughtful while the board he eyed,
Eumæus pours on high the purple tide;
The king with smiling looks his joy express'd,
And thus the kind inviting host address'd:

'Say now, what man is he, the man deplor'd,
So rich, so potent, whom you style your lord?
Late with such affluence and possessions bless'd,
And now in honour's glorious bed at rest.
Whoever was the warrior, he must be
To fame no stranger, nor perhaps to me;
Who (so the gods, and so the fates ordain'd)
Have wander'd many a sea, and many a land.'

‘ Small is the faith the prince and queen ascribe
(Replied Eumæus) to the wandering tribe:
For needy strangers still to flattery fly,
And want too oft betrays the tongue to lie.
Each vagrant traveller that touches here,
Deludes with fallacies the royal ear,
To dear remembrance makes his image rise,
And calls the springing sorrows from her eyes.
Such thou may’st be. But he whose name you crave
Moulders in earth, or welters on the wave,
Or food for fish, or dogs, his relics lie,
Or, torn by birds, are scatter’d through the sky.
So perish’d he: and left (for ever lost)
Much woe to all, but sure to me the most.
So mild a master never shall I find:
Less dear the parents whom I left behind,
Less soft my mother, less my father kind.
Not with such transport would my eyes run o’er,
Again to hail them in their native shore,
As lov’d Ulysses once more to embrace,
Restor’d and breathing in his natal place.
That name, for ever dread, yet ever dear,
E’en in his absence I pronounce with fear:
In my respect, he bears a prince’s part;
But lives a very brother in my heart.’

Thus spoke the faithful swain, and thus rejoin’d
The master of his grief, the man of patient mind:
‘ Ulysses, friend! shall view his old abodes,
Distrustful as thou art, nor doubt the gods.
Nor speak I rashly, but with faith averr’d,
And what I speak attesting heaven has heard.
If so, a cloak and vesture be my meed;
Till his return no title shall I plead,
Though certain be my news, and great my need.
Whom want itself can force untruths to tell,
My soul detests him as the gates of hell.

‘ Thou first be witness, hospitable Jove!
And every god inspiring social love!
And witness every household power that waits
Guard of these fires, and angel of these gates!
Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,
His ancient realms Ulysses shall survey;

In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn,
And the lost glories of his house return.'

'Nor shall that meed be thine, nor ever more
Shall lov'd Ulysses hail this happy shore
(Replied Eumæus): to the present hour
Now turn thy thought and joys within our pow'r.
From sad reflection let my soul repose;
The name of him awakes a thousand woes.
But guard him, gods! and to these arms restore!
Not his true consort can desire him more;
Not old Laertes, broken with despair;
Not young Telemachus, his blooming heir.
Alas, Telemachus! my sorrows flow
Afresh for thee, my second cause of woe!
Like some fair plant set by a heavenly hand,
He grew, he flourish'd, and he bless'd the land;
In all the youth his father's image shin'd,
Bright in his person, brighter in his mind.
What man, or god, deceiv'd his better sense,
Far on the swelling seas to wander hence?
To distant Pylos hapless is he gone,
To seek his father's fate, and find his own!
For traitors wait his way, with dire design
To end at once the great Arcesian line.
But let us leave him to their wills above;
The fates of men are in the hand of Jove.
And now, my venerable guest, declare
Your name, your parents, and your native air:
Sincere, from whence begun your course relate,
And to what ship I owe the friendly freight.'

Thus he; and thus, with prompt invention bold,
The cautious chief his ready story told:

'On dark reserve what better can prevail,
Or from the fluent tongue produce the tale,
Than when two friends, alone, in peaceful place
Confer, and wines and cates the table grace;
But most the kind inviter's cheerful face?
Thus might we sit, with social goblets crown'd,
Till the whole circle of the year goes round;
Not the whole circle of the year would close
My long narration of a life of woes.

But such was heaven's high will ! Know then, I came
From sacred Crete, and from a sire of fame,
Castor Hylacides (that name he bore)
Belov'd and honour'd in his native shore ;
Bless'd in his riches, in his children more.
Sprung of a handmaid, from a bought embrace,
I shar'd his kindness with his lawful race :
But when that fate, which all must undergo,
From earth remov'd him to the shades below,
The large domain his greedy sons divide,
And each was portion'd as the lots decide.
Little, alas ! was left my wretched share,
Except a house, a covert from the air :
But what by niggard fortune was denied,
A willing widow's copious wealth supplied.
My valour was my plea, a gallant mind
That, true to honour, never lagg'd behind
(The sex is ever to a soldier kind).
Now wasting years my former strength confound,
And added woes have bow'd me to the ground ;
Yet by the stubble you may guess the grain,
And mark the ruins of no vulgar man.
Me, Pallas gave to lead the martial storm,
And the fair ranks of battle to deform :
Me, Mars inspir'd to turn the foe to flight,
And tempt the secret ambush of the night.
Let ghastly death in all his forms appear,
I saw him not ; it was not mine to fear.
Before the rest I rais'd my ready steel ;
The first I met, he yielded, or he fell.
But works of peace my soul disdain'd to bear,
The rural labour or domestic care.
To raise the mast, the missile dart to wing,
And send swift arrows from the bounding string,
Were arts the gods made grateful to my mind ;
Those gods who turn (to various ends design'd)
The various thoughts and talents of mankind.
Before the Grecians touch'd the Trojan plain,
Nine times commander or by land or main,
In foreign fields I spread my glory far,
Great in the praise, rich in the spoils of war :

Thence, charg'd with riches, as increas'd in fame,
To Crete return'd, an honourable name.
But when great Jove that direful war decreed,
Which rous'd all Greece and made the mighty bleed,
Our states myself and Idomen employ
To lead their fleets, and carry death to Troy.
Nine years we warr'd: the tenth saw Ilion fall;
Homeward we sail'd, but heaven dispers'd us all.
One only month my wife enjoy'd my stay;
So will'd the god who gives and takes away.
Nine ships I mann'd, equipp'd with ready stores,
Intent to voyage to the' Egyptian shores;
In feast and sacrifice my chosen train
Six days consum'd; the seventh we plough'd the main.
Crete's ample fields diminish to our eye;
Before the Boreal blast the vessels fly:
Safe through the level seas we sweep our way;
The steerman governs, and the ships obey.
The fifth fair morn we stem the' Egyptian tide,
And tilting o'er the bay the vessels ride:
To anchor there my fellows I command,
And spies commission to explore the land.
But, sway'd by lust of gain, and headlong will,
The coasts they ravage, and the natives kill.
The spreading clamour to their city flies,
And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise.
The reddening dawn reveals the circling fields
Horrid with bristly spears, and glancing shields.
Jove thunder'd on their side. Our guilty head
We turn'd to flight: the gathering vengeance spread
On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lie dead.
I then explor'd my thought, what course to prove?
(And sure the thought was dictated by Jove;
O had he left me to that happier doom,
And sav'd a life of miseries to come!)

The radiant helmet from my brows unlac'd,
And low on earth my shield and javelin cast,
I meet the monarch with a suppliant's face,
Approach his chariot, and his knees embrace.
He heard, he sav'd, he plac'd me at his side:
My state he pitied, and my tears he dried,

Restrain'd the rage the vengeful foe express'd,
And turn'd the deadly weapons from my breast.
Pious! to guard the hospitable rite,
And fearing Jove, whom mercy's works delight.

' In Egypt thus with peace and plenty bless'd
I liv'd (and happy still had liv'd) a guest:
On seven bright years successive blessings wait;
The next chang'd all the colour of my fate.
A false Phœnician, of insidious mind,
Vers'd in vile arts, and foe to humankind,
With semblance fair invites me to his home;
I seiz'd the proffer (ever fond to roam);
Domestic in his faithless roof I stay'd,
Till the swift sun his annual circle made.
To Lybia then he meditates the way;
With guileful art a stranger to betray,
And sell to bondage in a foreign land:
Much doubting, yet compell'd, I quit the strand.
Through the mid seas the nimble pinnace sails,
Aloof from Crete, before the northern gales:
But when remote her chalky cliffs we lost,
And far from ken of any other coast,
When all was wild expanse of sea and air,
Then doom'd high Jove due vengeance to prepare.
He hung a night of horrors o'er their head,
(The shaded ocean blacken'd as it spread)
He launch'd the fiery bolt; from pole to pole
Broad burst the lightnings, deep the thunders roll;
In giddy rounds the whirling ship is toss'd,
And all in clouds of smothering sulphur lost.
As from a hanging rock's tremendous height,
The sable crows, with intercepted flight,
Drop endlong; scar'd, and black with sulphurous hue,
So from the deck are hurl'd the ghastly crew.
Such end the wicked found! But Jove's intent
Was yet to save the oppress'd and innocent.
Plac'd on the mast (the last recourse of life)
With winds and waves I held unequal strife;
For nine long days the billows tilting o'er,
'The tenth soft wafts me to Thresprotia's shore.
'The monarch's son a shipwreck'd wretch reliev'd,
The sire with hospitable rites receiv'd,

And in his palace like a brother plac'd,
With gifts of price and gorgeous garments grac'd.
While here I sojourn'd, oft I heard the fame
How late Ulysses to the country came,
How lov'd, how honour'd in this court he stay'd,
And here his whole collected treasure laid;
I saw myself the vast unnumber'd store
Of steel elaborate, and refulgent ore,
And brass high heap'd amidst the regal dome;
Immense supplies for ages yet to come!
Meantime he voyag'd to explore the will
Of Jove on high Dodona's holy hill,
What means might best his safe return avail,
To come in pomp, or bear a secret sail?
Full oft has Phidon, whilst he pour'd the wine,
Attesting solemn all the powers divine,
That soon Ulysses would return, declar'd,
The sailors waiting, and the ships prepar'd.
But first the king dismiss'd me from his shores,
For fair Dulichium crown'd with fruitful stores;
To good Acastus' friendly care consign'd:
But other counsels pleas'd the sailors' mind:
New frauds were plotted by the faithless train,
And misery demands me once again.
Soon as remote from shore they plough the wave,
With ready hands they rush to seize their slave;
Then with these tatter'd rags they wrapp'd me round,
(Stripp'd of my own) and to the vessel bound.
At eve, at Ithaca's delightful land
The ship arriv'd: forth-issuing on the sand,
They sought repast; while to the' unhappy kind,
The pitying gods themselves my chains unbind.
Soft I descended, to the sea applied
My naked breast, and shot along the tide.
Soon pass'd beyond their sight, I left the flood,
And took the spreading shelter of the wood.
Their prize escap'd, the faithless pirates mourn'd,
But deem'd inquiry vain, and to their ship return'd.
Screen'd by protecting gods from hostile eyes,
They led me to a good man and a wise;
To live beneath thy hospitable care,
And wait the woes heaven dooms me yet to bear.'

‘ Unhappy guest ! whose sorrows touch my mind !
(Thus good Eumæus with a sigh rejoin’d)
For real sufferings since I grieve sincere,
Check not with fallacies the springing tear ;
Nor turn the passion into groundless joy
For him, whom heaven has destin’d to destroy.
Oh ! had he perish’d on some well-fought day,
Or in his friends’ embraces died away !
That grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
Historic marbles, to record his praise :
His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,
Had with transmissive honours grac’d his son.
Now snatch’d by harpies to the dreary coast,
Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost !
While pensive in this solitary den,
Far from gay cities, and the ways of men,
I linger life ; nor to the court repair,
But when the constant queen commands my care ;
Or when, to taste her hospitable board,
Some guest arrives, with rumours of her lord ;
And these indulge their want, and those their woe,
And here the tears, and there the goblets flow.
By many such have I been warn’d ; but chief
By one Ætolian robb’d of all belief,
Whose hap it was to this our roof to roam,
For murder banish’d from his native home :
He swore, Ulysses on the coast of Crete
Stay’d but a season to refit his fleet ;
A few revolving months should waft him o’er,
Fraught with bold warriors, and a boundless store.
O thou ! whom age has taught to understand,
And heaven has guided with a favouring hand ;
On god or mortal to obtrude a lie
Forbear, and dread to flatter, as to die.
Not for such ends my house and heart are free,
But dear respect to Jove, and charity.’

‘ And why, O swain of unbelieving mind !
(Thus quick replied the wisest of mankind)
Doubt you my oath ? yet more my faith to try,
A solemn compact let us ratify,
And witness every power that rules the sky !
If here Ulysses from his labours rest,
Be then my prize a tunic and a vest ;

And, where my hopes invite me, straight transport
In safety to Dulichium's friendly court.

But if he greets not thy desiring eye,
Hurl me from yon dread precipice on high ;
'The due reward of fraud and perjury.'

'Doubtless, O guest ! great laud and praise were mine
(Replied the swain) for spotless faith divine,
If, after social rites and gifts bestow'd,
I stain'd my hospitable hearth with blood :
How would the gods my righteous toils succeed,
And bless the hand that made a stranger bleed ?
No more—the' approaching hours of silent night
First claim refection, then to rest invite ;
Beneath our humble cottage let us haste,
And here, unenvied, rural dainties taste.'

Thus commun'd these ; while to their lowly dome
The full-fed swine return'd with evening home ;
Compell'd, reluctant, to their several sties,
With din obstreperous, and ungrateful cries.
Then to the slaves—'Now from the herd the best
Select, in honour of our foreign guest :
With him, let us the genial banquet share,
For great and many are the griefs we bear ;
While those who from our labours heap their board,
Blaspheme their feeder, and forget their lord.'

Thus speaking, with dispatchful hand he took
A weighty axe, and cleft the solid oak ;
This on the earth he pil'd ; a boar full-fed,
Of five years age, before the pile was led :
The swain, whom acts of piety delight,
Observant of the gods, begins the rite ;
First shears the forehead of the bristly boar,
And suppliant stands, invoking every power
To speed Ulysses to his native shore.
A knotty stake then aiming at his head,
Down dropp'd he groaning, and the spirit fled.
The scorching flames climb round on every side :
Then the sing'd members they with skill divide ;
On these, in rolls of fat involv'd with art,
The choicest morsels lay from every part.
Some in the flames, bestrow'd with flour, they threw ;
Some cut in fragments, from the forks they drew :

These while on several tables they dispose,
As priest himself the blameless rustic rose;
Expert the destin'd victim to dispart
In seven just portions, pure of hand and heart.
One sacred to the nymphs apart they lay;
Another to the winged son of May:
The rural tribe in common share the rest,
The king the chine, the honour of the feast,
Who sat delighted at his servant's board:
The faithful servant joy'd his unknown lord.

'O be thou dear (Ulysses cried) to Jove,
As well thou claim'st a grateful stranger's love!

'Be then thy thanks (the bounteous swain replied)
Enjoyment of the good the gods provide.

From God's own hand descend our joys and woes;

These he decrees, and he but suffers those:

All power is his, and whatsoe'er he wills,

The will itself, omnipotent, fulfils.'

This said, the first fruits to the gods he gave;

Then pour'd of offer'd wine the sable wave:

In great Ulysses' hand he plac'd the bowl,

He sat, and sweet refection cheer'd his soul.

The bread from canisters Mesaulius gave,

(Eumæus' proper treasure bought this slave,

And led from Taphos, to attend his board,

A servant added to his absent lord)

His task it was the wheaten loaves to lay,

And from the banquet take the bowls away.

And now the rage of hunger was repress'd,

And each betakes him to his couch to rest.

Now came the night, and darkness cover'd o'er

The face of things; the winds began to roar;

The driving storm the watery west wind pours,

And Jove descends in deluges of showers.

Studios of rest and warmth, Ulysses lies,

Foreseeing from the first the storm would rise;

In mere necessity of coat and cloak,

With artful preface to his host he spoke:

'Hear me, my friends! who this good banquet grace;

'Tis sweet to play the fool in time and place;

And wine can of their wits the wise beguile;

Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile;

The grave in merry measures frisk about,
And many a long-repent'd word bring out.
Since to be talkative I now commence,
Let wit cast off the sullen yoke of sense.
Once I was strong (would heaven restore those days),
And with my betters claim'd a share of praise.
Ulysses, Menelaus, led forth a band,
And join'd me with them ('twas their own command),
A deathful ambush for the foe to lay ;
Beneath Troy walls by night we took our way :
There, clad in arms, along the marshes spread,
We made the osier-fringed bank our bed.
Full soon the' inclemency of heaven I feel,
Nor had these shoulders covering, but of steel.
Sharp blew the north : snow whitening all the fields
Froze with the blast, and gathering glaz'd our shields.
There all but I, well fenc'd with cloak and vest,
Lay cover'd by their ample shields at rest.
Fool that I was ! I left behind my own ;
The skill of weather and of winds unknown,
And trusted to my coat and shield alone !
When now was wasted more than half the night,
And the stars faded at approaching light ;
Sudden I jogg'd Ulysses, who was laid
Fast by my side, and, shivering, thus I said :
 " Here longer in this field I cannot lie,
The winter pinches, and with cold I die,
And die asham'd (O wisest of mankind),
The only fool who left his cloak behind."
 ' He thought, and answer'd : (hardly waking yet,
Sprung in his mind the momentary wit ;
That wit, which or in council, or in fight,
Still met the' emergence, and determin'd right)
 " Hush thee, he cried, (soft-whispering in my ear)
Speak not a word, lest any Greek may hear—"
And then (supporting on his arm his head)
 " Hear me, companions ! (thus aloud he said)
Methinks too distant from the fleet we lie :
E'en now a vision stood before my eye,
And sure the warning vision was from high :
Let from among us some swift courier rise,
Haste to the general, and demand supplies."

‘Upstarted Thoas straight, Andraemon’s son,
Nimbly he rose, and cast his garment down;
Instant, the racer vanish’d off the ground;
That instant, in his cloak I wrapp’d me round:
And safe I slept, till brightly dawning shone
The morn, conspicuous on her golden throne.

‘O were my strength as then, as then my age,
Some friend would fence me from the winter’s rage.
Yet tatter’d as I look, I challeng’d then
The honours, and the offices of men:
Some master or some servant would allow
A cloak and vest—but I am nothing now!’

‘Well hast thou spoke (rejoin’d the’ attentive swain),
Thy lips let fall no idle words or vain!
Nor garment shalt thou want, nor aught beside
Meet for the wandering suppliant to provide.
But in the morning take thy clothes again,
For here one vest suffices every swain;
No change of garments to our hinds is known:
But when return’d, the good Ulysses’ son
With better hand shall grace with fit attires
His guest and send thee where thy soul desires.’

The honest herdsman rose, as this he said,
And drew before the hearth the stranger’s bed:
The fleecy spoils of sheep, a goat’s rough hide,
He spreads; and adds a mantle thick and wide:
With store to heap above him, and below,
And guard each quarter as the tempests blow.
There lay the king, and all the rest supine;
All but the careful master of the swine:
Forth hasted he to tend his bristly care:
Well arm’d, and fenc’d against nocturnal air;
His weighty falchion o’er his shoulder tied:
His shaggy cloak a mountain goat supplied:
With his broad spear, the dread of dogs and men,
He seeks his lodging in the rocky den.
There to the tusky herd he bends his way,
Where, screen’d from Boreas, high o’er-arch’d they lay.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT.

The Return of Telemachus.

The goddess Minerva commands Telemachus in a vision to return to Ithaca. Pisistratus and he take leave of Menelaus, and arrive at Pylos: where they part; and Telemachus sets sail, after having received on board Theoclymenus the soothsayer. The scene then changes to the cottage of Eumæus, who entertains Ulysses with a recital of his adventures. In the meantime Telemachus arrives on the coast; and, sending the vessel to the town, proceeds by himself to the lodge of Eumæus.

Now had Minerva reach'd those ample plains,
Fam'd for the dance, where Menelaüs reigns.
Anxious she flies to great Ulysses' heir,
His instant voyage challeng'd all her care.
Beneath the royal portico display'd,
With Nestor's son, Telemachus was laid:
In sleep profound the son of Nestor lies;
Not thine, Ulysses! care unseal'd his eyes:
Restless he griev'd, with various fears oppress'd,
And all thy fortunes roll'd within his breast.
When, 'O Telemachus! (the goddess said)
Too long in vain, too widely hast thou stray'd:
Thus leaving careless thy paternal right
The robbers' prize, the prey to lawless might.
On fond pursuits neglectful while you roam,
E'en now the hand of rapine sacks the dome.
Hence to Atrides; and his leave implore
To launch thy vessel for thy natal shore:

Fly, whilst thy mother virtuous yet withstands
Her kindred's wishes, and her sire's commands.
Through both, Eurymachus pursues the dame;
And with the noblest gifts asserts his claim.
Hence therefore, while thy stores thy own remain,
Thou know'st the practice of the female train;
Lost in the children of the present spouse,
They slight the pledges of their former vows:
Their love is always with the lover past;
Still the succeeding flame expels the last.
Let o'er thy house some chosen maid preside,
Till heaven decrees to bless thee in a bride.
But now thy more attentive ears incline;
Observe the warnings of a power divine:
For thee their snares the suitor lords shall lay
In Samos' sands, or straits of Ithaca:
To seize thy life shall lurk the murderous band,
Ere yet thy footsteps press thy native land.
No—sooner far their riot and their lust
All-covering earth shall bury deep in dust!
Then distant from the scatter'd islands steer,
Nor let the night retard thy full career;
Thy heavenly guardian shall instruct the gales
To smooth thy passage, and supply thy sails:
And when at Ithaca thy labour ends,
Send to the town thy vessel with thy friends;
But seek thou first the master of the swine,
(For still to thee his loyal thoughts incline)
There pass the night: while he his course pursues
To bring Penelope the wish'd-for news,
That thou, safe sailing from the Pylian strand,
Art come to bless her in thy native land.'

Thus spoke the goddess; and resum'd her flight
To the pure regions of eternal light.
Meanwhile Pisistratus he gently shakes,
And with these words the slumbering youth awakes:

'Rise, son of Nestor! for the road prepare,
And join the harness'd coursers to the car.'

'What cause (he cried) can justify our flight,
To tempt the dangers of forbidding night?
Here wait we rather, till approaching day
Shall prompt our speed, and point the ready way.'

Nor think of flight before the Spartan king
Shall bid farewell, and bounteous presents bring;
Gifts, which, to distant ages safely stor'd,
The sacred act of friendship shall record.'

Thus he. But when the dawn bestreak'd the east,
The king from Helen rose, and sought his guest.
As soon as his approach the hero knew,
The splendid mantle round him first he threw,
Then o'er his ample shoulders whirl'd the cloke,
Respectful met the monarch, and bespoke:

'Hail, great Atrides, favour'd of high Jove!
Let not thy friends in vain for license move.
Swift let us measure back the watery way,
Nor check our speed, impatient of delay.'

'If with desire so strong thy bosom glows,
Ill (said the king) should I thy wish oppose;
For oft in others freely I reprove
The ill-tim'd efforts of officious love;
Who love too much, hate in the like extreme,
And both the golden mean alike condemn.
Alike he thwarts the hospitable end,
Who drives the free, or stays the hasty friend;
True friendship's laws are by this rule express'd,
Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.
Yet stay, my friends, and in your chariot take
The noblest presents that our love can make:
Meantime commit we to our women's care
Some choice domestic viands to prepare:
The traveller, rising from the banquet gay,
Eludes the labours of the tedious way.
Then if a wider course shall rather please
Through spacious Argos, and the realms of Greece,
Atrides in his chariot shall attend;
Himself thy convoy to each royal friend.
No prince will let Ulysses' heir remove
Without some pledge, some monument of love:
These will the caldron, these the tripod give,
From those the well-pair'd mules we shall receive,
Or bowl emboss'd whose golden figures live.'

To whom the youth, for prudence fam'd, replied:
'O monarch, care of heaven! thy people's pride!
No friend in Ithaca my place supplies;
No powerful hands are there, no watchful eyes:

My stores expos'd, and fenceless house, demand
The speediest succour from my guardian hand;
Lest in a search too anxious and too vain
Of one lost joy, I lose what yet remain.'

His purpose when the generous warrior heard,
He charg'd the household cates to be prepar'd.
Now with the dawn, from his adjoining home,
Was Boethœdes Eteoneus come;
Swift as the word he forms the rising blaze,
And o'er the coals the smoking fragments lays.
Meantime the king, his son, and Helen, went
Where the rich wardrobe breath'd a costly scent.
The king selected from the glittering rows
A bowl: the prince a silver beaker chose.
The beauteous queen revolv'd with careful eyes
Her various textures of unnumber'd dies,
And chose the largest; with no vulgar art
Her own fair hands embroider'd every part:
Beneath the rest it lay divinely bright,
Like radiant Hesper o'er the gems of night.
Then with each gift they hasten'd to their guest,
And thus the king Ulysses' heir address'd:

' Since fix'd are thy resolves, may thundering Jove
With happiest omens thy desires approve!
This silver bowl, whose costly margins shine
Enchas'd with gold, this valued gift be thine:
To me this present, of Vulcanian frame,
From Sidon's hospitable monarch came;
To thee we now consign the precious load,
The pride of kings, and labour of a god.'

Then gave the cup; while Megapenthes brought
The silver vase with living sculpture wrought.
The beauteous queen, advancing next, display'd
The shining veil, and thus endearing said:

' Accept, dear youth, this monument of love,
Long since, in better days, by Helen wove:
Safe in thy mother's care the vesture lay,
To deck thy pride, and grace thy nuptial day.
Meantime may'st thou with happiest speed regain
Thy stately palace, and thy wide domain.'

She said, and gave the veil:—with grateful look
The prince the variegated present took.

And now, when through the royal dome they pass'd,
High on a throne the king each stranger plac'd.
A golden ewer the attendant damsel brings,
Replete with water from the crystal springs;
With copious streams the shining vase supplies
A silver laver of capacious size.
They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
The glittering canisters are crown'd with bread;
Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
Of choicest sort and savour; rich repast!
While Eteoneus portions out the shares,
Atrides' son the purple draught prepares.
And now (each sated with the genial feast,
And the short rage of thirst and hunger ceas'd)
Ulysses' son, with his illustrious friend,
The horses join, the polish'd car ascend:
Along the court the fiery steeds rebound,
And the wide portal echoes to the sound.
The king precedes; a bowl with fragrant wine
(Libation destin'd to the powers divine)
His right hand held: before the steeds he stands,
Then, mix'd with prayers, he utters these commands:
 'Farewell and prosper, youths!—let Nestor know
What grateful thoughts still in this bosom glow,
For all the proofs of his paternal care,
Through the long dangers of the ten years' war.'
 'Ah! doubt not our report (the prince rejoin'd)
Of all the virtues of thy generous mind.
And oh! return'd, might we Ulysses meet!
To him thy presents show, thy words repeat:
How will each speech his grateful wonder raise!
How will each gift indulge us in thy praise!'

Scarce ended thus the prince, when on the right
Advanc'd the bird of Jove; auspicious sight!
A milk-white fowl his clenching talons bore,
With care domestic pamper'd at the floor.
Peasants in vain with threatening cries pursue,
In solemn speed the bird majestic flew
Full dexter to the car: the prosperous sight
Fill'd every breast with wonder and delight.

But Nestor's son the cheerful silence broke,
And in these words the Spartan chief bespoke:

‘ Say if to us the gods these omens send,
Or fates peculiar to thyself portend?’

Whilst yet the monarch paus’d, with doubts oppress’d,
The beauteous queen reliev’d his labouring breast.

‘ Hear me (she cried) to whom the gods have given
To read this sign, and mystic sense of heaven.

As thus the plummy sovereign of the air
Left on the mountain’s brow his callow care,
And wander’d through the wide etherial way,
To pour his wrath on yon luxurious prey;
So shall thy godlike father, toss’d in vain
Through all the dangers of the boundless main,
Arrive (or is perchance already come)
From slaughter’d gluttons to release the dome.’

‘ Oh! if this promis’d bliss by thundering Jove
(The prince replied) stand fix’d in fate above;
To thee, as to some god, I’ll temples raise,
And crown thy altars with the costly blaze.’

He said; and, bending o’er his chariot, flung
Athwart the fiery steeds the smarting thong;
The bounding shafts upon the harness play,
Till night descending intercepts the way.
To Diocles, at Pheræ, they repair,
Whose boasted sire was sacred Alpheus’ heir;
With him all night the youthful strangers stay’d,
Nor found the hospitable rites unpaid.
But soon as morning, from her orient bed,
Had ting’d the mountains with her earliest red,
They join’d the steeds, and on the chariot sprung;
The brazen portals in their passage rung.

To Pylos soon they came: when thus begun,
To Nestor’s heir, Ulysses’ godlike son:
‘ Let not Pisistratus in vain be press’d,
Nor unconsenting hear his friend’s request;
His friend by long hereditary claim,
In toils his equal, and in years the same.
No further from our vessel, I implore,
The coursers drive; but lash them to the shore.
Too long thy father would his friend detain;
I dread his proffer’d kindness, urg’d in vain.’

The hero paus’d, and ponder’d this request,
While love and duty warr’d within his breast.

At length resolv'd, he turn'd his ready hand,
And lash'd his panting coursers to the strand.
There, while within the poop with care he stor'd
The regal presents of the Spartan lord ;
' With speed be gone (said he), call every mate,
Ere yet to Nestor I the tale relate.

'Tis true, the fervour of his generous heart
Brooks no repulse, nor couldst thou soon depart ;
Himself will seek thee here, nor wilt thou find,
In words alone, the Pylian monarch kind.
But when arriv'd he thy return shall know,
How will his breast with honest fury glow !'
This said, the sounding strokes his horses fire,
And soon he reach'd the palace of his sire.

' Now (cried Telemachus) with speedy care
Hoist every sail, and every oar prepare.'
Swift as the word his willing mates obey,
And seize their seats, impatient for the sea.

Meantime the prince with sacrifice adores
Minerva, and her guardian aid implores ;
When lo ! a wretch ran breathless to the shore,
New from his crime, and reeking yet with gore :
A seer he was, from great Melampus sprung,
Melampus, who in Pylos flourish'd long,
Till, urg'd by wrongs, a foreign realm he chose,
Far from the hateful cause of all his woes.
Neleus his treasures one long year detains ;
As long, he groan'd in Phylacus's chains :
Meantime, what anguish and what rage combin'd,
For lovely Pero rack'd his labouring mind !
Yet scap'd he death ; and, vengeful of his wrong,
To Pylos drove the lowing herds along :
Then (Neleus vanquish'd, and consign'd the fair
To Bias' arms) he sought a foreign air :
Argos the rich for his retreat he chose,
There form'd his empire ; there his palace rose.
From him Antiphates and Mantius came :
The first begot Oicleus great in fame,
And he Amphiaraus, immortal name !
The people's saviour, and divinely wise,
Belov'd by Jove, and him who gilds the skies,
Yet short his date of life ! by female pride he dies.

From Mantius, Clitus ; whom Aurora's love
Snatch'd for his beauty to the thrones above :
And Polyphides ; on whom Phœbus shone
With fullest rays, Amphiaraus now gone ;
In Hyperesia's groves he made abode,
And taught mankind the counsels of the god.
From him sprung Theoclymenus, who found
(The sacred wine yet foaming on the ground)
Telemachus : whom, as to heaven he press'd
His ardent vows, the stranger thus address'd :

‘ O thou ! that dost thy happy course prepare
With pure libations, and with solemn pray'r ;
By that dread power to whom thy vows are paid ;
By all the lives of these ; thy own dear head ;
Declare, sincerely, to no foe's demand,
Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land.’

‘ Prepare then (said Telemachus) to know
A tale from falsehood free, not free from woe.
From Ithaca, of royal birth, I came,
And great Ulysses (ever honour'd name !)
Was once my sire : though now for ever lost
In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !
Whose fate inquiring, through the world we rove ;
The last, the wretched proof of filial love.’

The stranger then : ‘ Nor shall I aught conceal,
But the dire secret of my fate reveal.
Of my own tribe an Argive wretch I slew ;
Whose powerful friends the luckless deed pursue
With unrelenting rage, and force from home
The blood-stain'd exile, ever doom'd to roam.
But bear, O bear me o'er yon azure flood ;
Receive the suppliant ! spare my destin'd blood !’

‘ Stranger (replied the prince) securely rest
Affianc'd in our faith : henceforth our guest.’
Thus affable, Ulysses' godlike heir
Takes from the stranger's hand the glittering spear :
He climbs the ship, ascends the stern with haste,
And by his side the guest accepted plac'd.
The chief his orders gives : the' obedient band
With due observance wait the chief's command :
With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind.

Minerva calls ; the ready gales obey
With rapid speed to whirl them o'er the sea.
Crunus they pass'd, next Chalcis roll'd away,
When thickening darkness clos'd the doubtful day ;
The silver Phæa's glittering rills they lost,
And skimm'd along by Elis' sacred coast.
Then cautious through the rocky reaches wind,
And, turning sudden, shun the death design'd.

Meantime the king, Eumæus, and the rest,
Sat in the cottage, at their rural feast :
The banquet past, and satiate every man,
To try his host Ulysses thus began :

‘ Yet one night more, my friends, indulge your guest ;
The last I purpose in your walls to rest :
To-morrow for myself I must provide,
And only ask your counsel, and a guide ;
Patient to roam the street, by hunger led,
And bless the friendly hand that gives me bread.
There in Ulysses' roof I may relate
Ulysses' wanderings to his royal mate ;
Or, mingling with the suitor's haughty train,
Not undeserving, some support obtain.
Hermes to me his various gifts imparts,
Patron of industry and manual arts :
Few can with me in dexterous works contend,
The pyre to build, the stubborn oak to rend ;
To turn the tasteful viand o'er the flame ;
Or foam the goblet with a purple stream.
Such are the tasks of men of mean estate,
Whom fortune dooms to serve the rich and great.’

‘ Alas ! (Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd)
How sprung a thought so monstrous in thy mind ?
If on that godless race thou wouldst attend,
Fate owes thee sure a miserable end !
Their wrongs and blasphemies ascend the sky,
And pull descending vengeance from on high.
Not such, my friend, the servants of their feast ;
A blooming train in rich embroidery dress'd.
With earth's whole tribute the bright table bends ;
And smiling round celestial youth attends.
Stay then : no eye askance beholds thee here ;
Sweet is thy converse to each social ear ;

Well pleas'd, and pleasing, in our cottage rest,
Till good Telemachus accepts his guest
With genial gifts, and change of fair attires,
And safe conveys thee where thy soul desires.'

To him the man of woes:—'O gracious Jove!
Reward this stranger's hospitable love,
Who knows the son of sorrow to relieve,
Cheers the sad heart, nor lets affliction grieve.
Of all the ills unhappy mortals know,
A life of wanderings is the greatest woe:
On all their weary ways wait care and pain,
And pine and penury, a meagre train.
To such a man since harbour you afford,
Relate the further fortunes of your lord;
What cares his mother's tender breast engage,
And sire, forsaken on the verge of age;
Beneath the son prolong they yet their breath,
Or range the house of darkness and of death?'

To whom the swain: 'Attend what you inquire:
Laertes lives, the miserable sire;—
Lives, but implores of every power to lay
The burden down, and wishes for the day.
Torn from his offspring in the eve of life,
Torn from the' embraces of his tender wife,
Sole, and all comfortless, he wastes away
Old age, untimely posting ere his day.
She too, sad mother! for Ulysses lost
Pin'd out her bloom, and vanish'd to a ghost.
(So dire a fate, ye righteous gods! avert
From every friendly, every feeling heart!)
While yet she was, though clouded o'er with grief,
Her pleasing converse minister'd relief:
With Climene, her youngest daughter, bred,
One roof contain'd us, and one table fed.
But when the softly stealing pace of time
Crept on from childhood into youthful prime,
To Samos' isle she sent the wedded fair;
Me to the fields, to tend the rural care;
Array'd in garments her own hands had wove,
Nor less the darling object of her love.
Her hapless death my brighter days o'ercast,
Yet Providence deserts me not at last;

My present labours food and drink procure,
And more, the pleasure to relieve the poor.
Small is the comfort from the queen to hear
Unwelcome news, or vex the royal ear ;
Blank and discountenanc'd the servants stand,
Nor dare to question where the proud command.
No profit springs beneath usurping pow'rs:
Want feeds not there where Luxury devours ;
Nor harbours Charity where Riot reigns :
Proud are the lords, and wretched are the swains.'

The suffering chief at this began to melt :—
' And oh, Eumæus ! thou (he cries) hast felt
The spite of fortune too ! her cruel hand
Snatch'd thee an infant from thy native land !
Snatch'd from thy parents' arms, thy parents' eyes,
To early wants ! a man of miseries !
Thy whole sad story, from its first, declare :
Sunk the fair city by the rage of war,
Where once thy parents dwelt ? or did they keep,
In humbler life, the lowing herds and sheep ?
So left, perhaps, to tend the fleecy train,
Rude pirates seiz'd, and shipp'd thee o'er the main ?
Doom'd a fair prize to grace some prince's board,
The worthy purchase of a foreign lord.'

' If then my fortunes can delight my friend,
A story, fruitful of events, attend :
Another's sorrow may thy ear enjoy ;
And wine the lengthen'd intervals employ.
Long nights the now declining year bestows :
A part we consecrate to soft repose ;
A part in pleasing talk we entertain,
For too much rest itself becomes a pain.
Let those, whom sleep invites, the call obey,
Their cares resuming with the dawning day :
Here let us feast ;—and to the feast be join'd
Discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind ;—
Review the series of our lives, and taste
The melancholy joy of evils pass'd :
For he who much has suffer'd, much will know ;
And pleas'd remembrance builds delight on woe.

' Above Ortygia lies an isle of fame,
Far hence remote, and Syria is the name :

(There curious eyes inscrib'd with wonder trace
The sun's diurnal, and his annual race)
Not large, but fruitful; stor'd with grass to keep
The bellowing oxen, and the bleating sheep.
Her sloping hills the mantling vines adorn,
And her rich valleys wave with golden corn.
No want, no famine, the glad natives know,
Nor sink by sickness to the shades below:
But when a length of years unnerves the strong,
Apollo comes, and Cynthia comes along;
They bend the silver bow with tender skill,
And void of pain the silent arrows kill.
Two equal tribes this fertile land divide,
Where two fair cities rise with equal pride.
But both in constant peace one prince obey,
And Ctesius there, my father, holds the sway.
Freighted, it seems, with toys of every sort,
A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port;
What time it chanc'd the palace entertain'd,
Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land.
This nymph, where anchor'd the Phœnician train,
To wash her robes descending to the main,
A smooth-tongued sailor won her to his mind;
(For love deceives the best of womankind)
A sudden trust from sudden liking grew;
She told her name, her race, and all she knew.
"I too (she cried) from glorious Sidon came,
My father Arybas, of wealthy fame;
But snatch'd by pirates from my native place,
The Taphians sold me to this man's embrace."

"Haste then (the false designing youth replied)
Haste to thy country: love shall be thy guide:
Haste to thy father's house, thy father's breast;
For still he lives, and lives with riches bless'd."

"Swear first (she cried) ye sailors! to restore
A wretch in safety to her native shore."
Swift as she ask'd, the ready sailors swore.
She then proceeds: "Now let our compact made
Be nor by signal nor by word betray'd,
Nor near me any of your crew descried
By road frequented, or by fountain side."

Be silence still our guard. The monarch's spies
(For watchful age is ready to surmise)
Are still at hand; and this, reveal'd, must be
Death to yourselves, eternal chains to me.
Your vessel loaded, and your traffic pass'd,
Dispatch a wary messenger with haste:
Then gold and costly treasures will I bring,
And more, the infant offspring of the king.
Him, child-like wandering forth, I'll lead away,
(A noble prize!) and to your ship convey."

' Thus spoke the dame, and homeward took the road.
A year they traffic, and their vessel load.
Their stores complete, and ready now to weigh,
A spy was sent their summons to convey:
An artist to my father's palace came,
With gold and amber chains, elaborate frame:
Each female eye the glittering links employ,
They turn, review, and cheapen every toy.
He took the' occasion as they stood intent,
Gave her the sign, and to his vessel went.
She straight pursued, and seiz'd my willing arm;
I follow'd smiling, innocent of harm.
Three golden goblets in the porch she found;
(The guests not enter'd, but the table crown'd)
Hid in her fraudulent bosom, these she bore.
Now set the sun, and darken'd all the shore:
Arriving then, where tilting on the tides
Prepar'd to launch the freighted vessel rides,
Aboard they heave us, mount their decks, and sweep
With level oar along the glassy deep.
Six calmy days, and six smooth nights we sail,
And constant Jove supplied the gentle gale.
The seventh, the fraudulent wretch (no cause descried)
Touch'd by Diana's vengeful arrow died.
Down dropp'd the caitiff-corps, a worthless load,
Down to the deep; there roll'd the future food
Of fierce sea-wolves, and monsters of the flood.
An helpless infant, I remain'd behind:
Thence borne to Ithaca by wave and wind;
Sold to Laertes by divine command,
And now adopted to a foreign land.'

To him the king: ' Reciting thus thy cares,
My secret soul in all thy sorrow shares:
But one choice blessing (such is Jove's high will)
Has sweeten'd all thy bitter draught of ill:
Torn from thy country to no hapless end,
The gods have, in a master, given a friend.
Whatever frugal nature needs is thine,
(For she needs little) daily bread and wine.
While I, so many wanderings past and woes,
Live but on what thy poverty bestows.'

So pass'd in pleasing dialogue away
The night: then down to short repose they lay;
Till radiant rose the messenger of day.
While in the port of Ithaca, the band
Of young Telemachus approach'd the land;
Their sails they loos'd, they lash'd the mast aside,
And cast their anchors, and the cables tied:
Then, on the breezy shore, descending, join
In grateful banquet o'er the rosy wine.
When thus the prince: ' Now each his course pursue;
I to the fields, and to the city you.
Long absent hence, I dedicate this day
My swains to visit, and the works survey.
Expect me with the morn, to pay the skies
Our debt of safe return, in feast and sacrifice.'

Then Theoclymenus: ' But who shall lend,
Meantime, protection to thy stranger-friend?
Straight to the queen and palace shall I fly;
Or, yet more distant, to some lord apply?'

The prince return'd:—' Renown'd in days of yore
Has stood our father's hospitable door;
No other roof a stranger should receive,
Nor other hands than ours the welcome give.
But in my absence riot fills the place:
Nor bears the modest queen a stranger's face;
From noisy revel far remote she flies;
But rarely seen, or seen with weeping eyes.
No:—let Eurymachus receive my guest;
Of nature courteous, and by far the best;
He wooes the queen with more respectful flame,
And emulates her former husband's fame.

With what success, 'tis Jove's alone to know,
And the hop'd nuptials turn to joy or woe.'

Thus speaking, on the right up soar'd in air
The hawk, Apollo's swift-wing'd messenger;
His deathful pounces tore a trembling dove:
The clotted feathers, scatter'd from above,
Between the hero and the vessel pour
Thick plumage, mingled with a sanguine show'r.

The' observing augur took the prince aside,
Seiz'd by the hand, and thus prophetic cried:
'Yon bird that dexter cuts the' aërial road,
Rose ominous, nor flies without a god!—
No race but thine shall Ithaca obey:
To thine, for ages, heaven decrees the sway.'
'Succeed the omen, gods! (the youth rejoin'd)
Soon shall my bounties speak a grateful mind;
And soon each envied happiness attend
The man who calls Telemachus his friend.'
Then to Peiræus: 'Thou whom time has prov'd
A faithful servant, by thy prince belov'd!
Till we returning shall our guest demand,
Accept this charge, with honour, at our hand.'

To this Peiræus: 'Joyful I obey;
Well pleas'd the hospitable rites to pay.
The presence of thy guest shall best reward
(If long thy stay) the absence of my lord.'

With that, their anchors he commands to weigh,
Mount the tall bark, and launch into the sea.
All with obedient haste forsake the shores,
And plac'd in order, spread their equal oars.
Then from the deck the prince his sandals takes;
Pois'd in his hand the pointed javelin shakes.
They part; while, lessening from the hero's view,
Swift to the town the well-row'd galley flew:
The hero trod the margin of the main,
And reach'd the mansion of his faithful swain.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVI.

ARGUMENT.

The Discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus.

Telemachus arriving at the lodge of Eumæus, sends him to carry Penelope the news of his return. Minerva appearing to Ulysses, commands him to discover himself to his son. The princes, who had lain in ambush to intercept Telemachus in his way, their project being defeated, return to Ithaca.

SOON as the morning blush'd along the plains,
Ulysses and the monarch of the swains
Awake the sleeping fires, their meal prepare,
And forth to pasture send the bristly care.

The prince's near approach the dogs descry,
And, fawning round his feet, confess their joy.
Their gentle blandishment the king survey'd,
Heard his resounding step, and instant said:

‘Some well-known friend, Eumæus! bends this way;
His steps I hear; the dogs familiar play.’

While yet he spoke, the prince advancing drew
Nigh to the lodge, and now appear'd in view.
Transported from his seat Eumæus sprung,
Dropp'd the full bowl, and round his bosom hung;
Kissing his cheek, his hand, while from his eye
The tears rain'd copious in a shower of joy.
As some fond sire who ten long winters grieves,
From foreign climes an only son receives,
(Child of his age) with strong paternal joy
Forward he springs, and clasps the favourite boy:

So round the youth his arms Eumæus spread,
As if the grave had given him from the dead.

‘ And is it thou, my ever-dear delight!
Oh art thou come to bless my longing sight?
Never, I never hop’d to view this day,
When o’er the waves you plough’d the desperate way.
Enter, my child! beyond my hopes restor’d,
O give these eyes to feast upon their lord.
Enter, oh seldom seen! for lawless powers
Too much detain thee from these silvan bowers.’

The prince replied: ‘ Eumæus, I obey.
To seek thee, friend, I hither took my way.
But say, if in the court the queen reside
Severely chaste, or if commenc’d a bride?’

Thus he; and thus the monarch of the swains:
‘ Severely chaste Penelope remains,
But lost to every joy, she wastes the day
In tedious cares, and weeps the night away.’

He ended, and (receiving as they pass
The javelin, pointed with a star of brass)
‘ They reach’d the dome; the dome with marble shin’d;
His seat Ulysses to the prince resign’d.

‘ Not so:—(exclaims the prince with decent grace)
For me, this house shall find an humbler place:
To’ usurp the honours due to silver hairs
And reverend strangers, modest youth forbears.’

Instant the swain the spoils of beasts supplies,
And bids the rural throne with osiers rise.
There sat the prince: the feast Eumæus spread,
And heap’d the shining canisters with bread.

Thick o’er the board the plenteous viands lay,
The frugal remnants of the former day.
Then in a bowl he tempers generous wines,
Around whose verge a mimic ivy twines.

And now the rage of thirst and hunger fled,
Thus young Ulysses to Eumæus said:

‘ Whence, father, from what shore this stranger, say?
What vessel bore him o’er the watery way?
To human step our land impervious lies,
And round the coast circumfluent oceans rise.’

The swain returns:—‘ A tale of sorrows hear.
In spacious Crete he drew his natal air:

Long doom'd to wander o'er the land and main;
For heaven has wove his thread of life with pain.
Half-breathless 'scaping to the land he flew
From Thesprot mariners, a murderous crew.

To thee my son the suppliant I resign:
I gave him my protection;—grant him thine.'

'Hard task (he cries) thy virtue gives thy friend,
Willing to aid, unable to defend.

Can strangers safely in the court reside,
Midst the swill'd insolence of lust and pride?

E'en I unsafe.—The queen in doubt to wed,
Or pay due honours to the nuptial bed!

Perhaps she weds; regardless of her fame,
Deaf to the mighty Ulyssean name.

However, stranger! from our grace receive
Such honours as befit a prince to give:

Sandals, a sword, and robes, respect to prove;
And safe to sail with ornaments of love.

Till then, thy guest amid the rural train
Far from the court, from danger far, detain.

'Tis mine with food the hungry to supply,
And clothe the naked from the inclement sky.

Here dwell in safety from the suitors' wrongs,
And the rude insults of ungovern'd tongues.

For shouldst thou suffer, powerless to relieve
I must behold it, and can only grieve.

The brave, encompass'd by an hostile train,
O'erpower'd by numbers, is but brave in vain.'

To whom, while anger in his bosom glows,
With warmth replies the man of mighty woes:

'Since audience mild is deign'd, permit my tongue
At once to pity and resent thy wrong.

My heart weeps blood, to see a soul so brave
Live to base insolence of power a slave.

But tell me, dost thou, prince, dost thou behold,
And hear, their midnight revels uncontroll'd;

Say, do thy subjects in bold faction rise;
Or priests in fabled oracles advise?

Or are thy brothers, who should aid thy pow'r,
Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour?

O that I were from great Ulysses sprung,

Or that these wither'd nerves like thine were strung;

Or, heavens! might he return! (and soon appear
He shall, I trust; a hero scorns despair)
Might he return, I yield my life a prey
To my worst foe, if that avenging day
Be not their last.—But should I lose my life,
Oppress'd by numbers in the glorious strife,
I choose the noble part; and yield my breath,
Rather than bear dishonour, worse than death:
Than see the hand of violence invade
The reverend stranger, and the spotless maid;
Than see the wealth of kings consum'd in waste,
The drunkards revel, and the gluttons feast.'

Thus he, with anger flashing from his eye;
Sincere the youthful hero made reply:
'Nor leagued in factious arms my subjects rise;
Nor priests in fabled oracles advise;
Nor are my brothers who should aid my pow'r
Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour.
Ah me! I boast no brother:—heaven's dread king
Gives from our stock an only branch to spring:
Alone Laertes reign'd Arcesius' heir;
Alone Ulysses drew the vital air;
And I alone the bed connubial grac'd,
An unblest'd offspring of a sire unblest'd!
Each neighbouring realm, conducive to our woe,
Sends forth her peers, and every peer a foe:
'The court proud Samos and Dulichium fills,
And lofty Zacynth crown'd with shady hills.
E'en Ithaca and all her lords invade
The' imperial sceptre, and the regal bed.
The queen, averse to love, yet aw'd by pow'r,
Seems half to yield, yet flies the bridal hour:
Meantime their licence uncontroll'd I bear;
E'en now they envy me the vital air:
But heaven will sure revenge, and gods there are.

'But go, Eumæus! to the queen impart
Our safe return, and ease a mother's heart.
Yet secret go: for numerous are my foes;
And here at least I may in peace repose.'

To whom the swain: 'I hear and I obey.
But old Laertes weeps his life away,

And deems thee lost. Shall I my speed employ
To bless his age, a messenger of joy?
The mournful hour that tore his son away
Sent the sad sire in solitude to stray:
Yet busied with his slaves, to ease his woe,
He dress'd the vine, and bade the garden blow;
Nor food nor wine refus'd: but since the day
That you to Pylos plough'd the watery way,
Nor wine nor food he tastes; but sunk in woes,
Wild springs the vine, no more the garden blows;
Shut from the walks of men, to pleasure lost,
Pensive and pale he wanders half a ghost.'

'Wretched old man! (with tears the prince returns)
Yet cease to go—what man so bless'd but mourns?
Were every wish indulg'd by favouring skies,
This hour should give Ulysses to my eyes.
But to the queen with speed dispatchful bear
Our safe return, and back with speed repair:
And let some handmaid of her train resort
To good Laertes in his rural court.'

While yet he spoke, impatient of delay,
He brac'd his sandals on, and strode away.
Then from the heavens the martial goddess flies
Through the wide fields of air, and cleaves the skies;
In form, a virgin of soft beauty's bloom,
Skill'd in the' illustrious labours of the loom.
Alone to Ithacus she stood display'd;
But unapparent as a viewless shade
Escap'd Telemachus: (the powers above
Seen or unseen, o'er earth at pleasure move)
The dogs intelligent confess'd the tread
Of power divine; and howling, trembling, fled.
The goddess, beckoning, waves her deathless hands;
Dauntless the king before the goddess stands.

'Then why (she said) O favour'd of the skies!
Why to thy godlike son this long disguise?
Stand forth reveal'd:—with him thy cares employ
Against thy foes.—Be valiant, and destroy!
Lo, I descend in that avenging hour,
To combat by thy side, thy guardian pow'r.'

She said, and o'er him waves her wand of gold;
Imperial robes his manly limbs infold:

At once with grace divine his frame improves ;
At once with majesty enlarg'd he moves :
Youth flush'd his reddening cheek, and from his brows
A length of hair in sable ringlets flows :
His blackening chin receives a deeper shade ;
Then from his eyes upsprung the warrior maid.

The hero re-ascends : the prince o'eraw'd
Scarce lifts his eyes, and bows as to a god.
Then with surprise (surprise chastis'd by fears)
'How art thou chang'd ! (he cried) a god appears !
Far other vests thy limbs majestic grace,
Far other glories lighten from thy face !
If heaven be thy abode, with pious care
Lo ! I the ready sacrifice prepare :
Lo ! gifts of labour'd gold adorn thy shrine,
To win thy grace :—O save us, power divine !'

'Few are my days (Ulysses made reply),
Nor I, alas ! descendant of the sky.
I am thy father.—O my son ! my son !
That father, for whose sake thy days have run
One scene of woe ; to endless cares consign'd,
And outrag'd by the wrongs of base mankind.'

Then rushing to his arms, he kiss'd his boy
With the strong raptures of a parent's joy.
Tears bathe his cheek, and tears the ground bedew :
He strain'd him close, as to his breast he grew.

'Ah me ! (exclaims the prince with fond desire)
Thou art not—no, thou canst not be my sire.
Heaven such illusion only can impose,
By the false joy, to aggravate my woes.
Who but a god can change the general doom,
And give to wither'd age a youthful bloom ?
Late, worn with years, in weeds obscene you trod ;
Now, cloth'd in majesty, you move a god !'

'Forbear (he cried) for heaven reserve that name ;
Give to thy father but a father's claim :
Other Ulysses shalt thou never see ;
I am Ulysses ;—I, my son, am he.
Twice ten sad years o'er earth and ocean toss'd,
'Tis given at length to view my native coast.
Pallas, unconquer'd maid, my frame surrounds
With grace divine ;—her power admits no bounds :

She o'er my limbs old age and wrinkles shed;
Now strong as youth, magnificent I tread.
The gods with ease frail man depress, or raise,
Exalt the lowly, or the proud debase.'

He spoke and sat. The prince with transport flew;
Hung round his neck, while tears his cheek bedew:
Nor less the father pour'd a social flood!

They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.
As the bold eagle with fierce sorrow stung,
Or parent vulture, mourns her ravish'd young:—
They cry, they scream, their unfledg'd brood a prey
To some rude churl, and borne by stealth away.

So they aloud—and tears in tides had run,
Their grief unfinish'd with the setting sun;
But, checking the full torrent in its flow,
The prince thus interrupts the solemn woe:
'What ship transported thee, O father, say,
And what bless'd hands have oar'd thee on the way?'

'All, all (Ulysses instant made reply),
I tell thee all, my child, my only joy!
Phæacians bore me to the port assign'd;
A nation ever to the stranger kind.
Wrapp'd in the' embrace of sleep, the faithful train
O'er seas convey'd me to my native reign.
Embroider'd vestures, gold, and brass, are laid
Conceal'd in caverns in the silvan shade.
Hither, intent the rival rout to slay,
And plan the scene of death, I bend my way:
So Pallas wills—but thou, my son, explain
The names and numbers of the' audacious train;
'Tis mine to judge if better to employ
Assistant force, or singly to destroy.'

'O'er earth (returns the prince) resounds thy name,
Thy well-tried wisdom, and thy martial fame:
Yet at thy words I start, in wonder lost—
Can we engage—not decads, but an host?
Can we alone in furious battle stand,
Against that numerous and determin'd band?
Hear then their numbers:—From Dulichium came
Twice twenty-six, all peers of mighty name;
Six are their menial train: twice twelve the boast
Of Samos: twenty from Zacynthus' coast:

And twelve our country's pride ; to these belong
Medon and Phemius, skill'd in heavenly song.
Two sewers from day to day the revels wait,
Exact of taste, and serve the feast in state.
With such a foe the' unequal fight to try,
Were by false courage unreveng'd to die.
Then what assistant powers you boast, relate,
Ere yet we mingle in the stern debate.'

' Mark well my voice (Ulysses straight replies)
What need of aids, if favour'd by the skies?
If shielded to the dreadful fight we move,
By mighty Pallas, and by thundering Jove?'

' Sufficient they (Telemachus rejoin'd)
Against the banded powers of all mankind:
They, high enthron'd above the rolling clouds,
Wither the strength of man, and awe the gods.'

' Such aids expect (he cries) when strong in might
We rise terrific to the task of fight.
But thou, when morn salutes the' aërial plain,
The court revisit, and the lawless train:
Me thither in disguise Eumæus leads ;
An aged mendicant in tatter'd weeds.
There, if base scorn insult my reverend age ;
Bear it, my son ! repress thy rising rage.
If outrag'd, cease that outrage to repel ;
Bear it, my son ! howe'er thy heart rebel.
Yet strive by prayer and counsel to restrain
Their lawless insults, though thou strive in vain ;
For wicked ears are deaf to wisdom's call ;
And vengeance strikes whom heaven has doom'd to fall.
Once more attend : when she whose power inspires
The thinking mind, my soul to vengeance fires,
I give the sign :—that instant from beneath,
Aloft convey the instruments of death,
Armour and arms : and if mistrust arise,
Thus veil the truth in plausible disguise :

" These glittering weapons, ere he sail'd to Troy,
Ulysses view'd with stern heroic joy :
Then, beaming o'er the' illumin'd wall they shone :
Now dust dishonours, all their lustre gone.
I bear them hence (so Jove my soul inspires)
From the pollution of the fuming fires ;

Lest when the bowl inflames, in vengeful mood
Ye rush to arms, and stain the feast with blood ;
Oft ready swords in luckless hour incite
The hand of wrath, and arm it for the fight."

' Such be the plea, and by the plea deceive :
For Jove infatuates all, and all believe.
Yet leave for each of us a sword to wield,
A pointed javelin, and a fenciful shield.
But by my blood that in thy bosom glows,
By that regard a son his father owes,—
The secret, that thy father lives, retain
Lock'd in thy bosom from the household train.
Hide it from all :—e'en from Eumæus hide ;—
From my dear father, and my dearer bride.
One care remains : to note the loyal few
Whose faith yet lasts among the menial crew ;
And noting, ere we rise in vengeance, prove
Who loves his prince :—for sure you merit love.'

To whom the youth : ' To emulate I aim
The brave and wise, and my great father's fame.
But reconsider, since the wisest err :—
Vengeance resolv'd, 'tis dangerous to defer.
What length of time must we consume in vain,
Too curious to explore the menial train !
While the proud foes, industrious to destroy
Thy wealth in riot, the delay enjoy.
Suffice it in this exigence alone
To mark the damsels that attend the throne :
Dispers'd the youth resides ; their faith to prove
Jove grants henceforth, if thou hast spoke from Jove.'

While in debate they waste the hours away,
The' associates of the prince repass'd the bay.
With speed they guide the vessel to the shores ;
With speed debarking land the naval stores ;
Then faithful to their charge, to Clytius bear,
And trust the presents to his friendly care.
Swift to the queen a herald flies to' impart
Her son's return, and ease a parent's heart :
Lest a sad prey to ever-musing cares,
Pale grief destroy what time awhile forbears.

The' uncautious herald with impatience burns,
And cries aloud—' Thy son, O queen, returns.'

Eumæus sage approach'd the imperial throne,
And breath'd his mandate to her ear alone.
Then measur'd back the way—The suitor band,
Stung to the soul, abash'd, confounded stand;
And issuing from the dome, before the gate,
With clouded looks, a pale assembly, sat.

At length Eurymachus: 'Our hopes are vain;
Telemachus in triumph sails the main.
Haste, rear the mast, the swelling shroud display;
Haste, to our ambush'd friends the news convey!'

Scarce had he spoke, when turning to the strand
Amphinomus survey'd the' associate band;
Full to the bay within the winding shores
With gather'd sails they stood, and lifted oars.
'O friends! (he cried—elate with rising joy)
See to the port secure the vessel fly!
Some god has told them; or themselves survey
The bark escap'd, and measure back their way.'

Swift at the word descending to the shores,
They moor the vessel, and unlade the stores:
Then moving from the strand, apart they sat;
And full and frequent, form'd a dire debate.

'Lives then the boy?'—'He lives (Antinous cries)
The care of gods and favourite of the skies.
All night we watch'd, till with her orient wheels
Aurora flam'd above the eastern hills.
And from the lofty brow of rocks by day
Took in the ocean with a broad survey.
Yet safe he sails!—the powers celestial give
To shun the hidden snares of death, and live.
But die he shall:—and thus condemn'd to bleed,
Be now the scene of instant death decreed:
Hope ye success? undaunted crush the foe.
Is he not wise? know this, and strike the blow.
Wait ye, till he to arms in council draws
The Greeks, averse too justly to our cause?
Strike, ere, the states conven'd, the foe betray
Our murderous ambush on the watery way.
Or choose ye vagrant from their rage to fly
Outcasts of earth, to breathe an unknown sky?
The brave prevent misfortune:—then be brave,
And bury future danger in his grave.

Returns he? ambush'd we'll his walk invade,
Or where he hides in solitude and shade:
And give the palace to the queen a dower,
Or him she blesses in the bridal hour.
But if submissive you resign the sway,
Slaves to a boy; go, flatter and obey.
Retire we instant to our native reign,
Nor be the wealth of kings consum'd in vain.
Then wed whom choice approves: the queen be given
To some bless'd prince, the prince decreed by heaven.'

Abash'd, the suitor train his voice attends;
Till from his throne Amphinomus ascends,
Who o'er Dulichium stretch'd his spacious reign
(A land of plenty, bless'd with every grain):
Chief of the numbers who the queen address'd;
And though displeasing, yet displeasing least.
Soft were his words; his actions wisdom sway'd:
Graceful awhile he paus'd—then mildly said:

'O friends, forbear! and be the thought withstood:
'Tis horrible to shed imperial blood!
Consult we first the' all-seeing powers above,
And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.
If they assent, e'en by this hand he dies;
If they forbid, I war not with the skies.'

He said: the rival train his voice approv'd,
And, rising, instant to the palace mov'd.
Arriv'd, with wild tumultuous noise they sat,
Recumbent on the shining thrones of state:

Then Medon, conscious of their dire debates,
The murderous council to the queen relates.
Touch'd at the dreadful story she descends:
Her hasty steps a damsel train attends.
Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
Sudden before the rival powers she stands:
And veiling decent with a modest shade
Her cheek, indignant to Antinous said:

'O void of faith! of all bad men the worst!
Renown'd for wisdom, by the' abuse accurs'd!
Mistaking fame proclaims thy generous mind!
Thy deeds denote thee of the basest kind.
Wretch! to destroy a prince that friendship gives;
While in his guest his murderer he receives:

Nor dread superior Jove, to whom belong
The cause of suppliants, and revenge of wrong.
Hast thou forgot (ingrateful as thou art),
Who sav'd thy father with a friendly part?
Lawless he ravag'd with his martial powers
The Taphian pirates on Thesprotia's shores;
Enrag'd, his life, his treasures they demand;
Ulysses sav'd him from the' avenger's hand.
And wouldst thou evil for his good repay?
His bed dishonour, and his house betray?
Afflict his queen? and with a murderous hand
Destroy his heir?—but cease;—'tis I command.'

'Far hence those fears (Eurymachus replied),
O prudent princess! bid thy soul confide.
Breathes there a man who dares that hero slay,
While I behold the golden light of day?
No: by the righteous powers of heaven I swear,
His blood in vengeance smokes upon my spear.
Ulysses, when my infant days I led,
With wine suffic'd me, and with dainties fed:
My generous soul abhors the' ungrateful part,
And my friend's son lives dearest to my heart.
Then fear no mortal arm:—if heaven destroy,
We must resign: for man is born to die.'

Thus smooth he ended; yet his death conspir'd:
Then, sorrowing, with sad step the queen retir'd.
With streaming eyes, all comfortless, deplor'd,
Touch'd with the dear remembrance of her lord;
Nor ceas'd, till Pallas bid her sorrows fly,
And in soft slumbers seal'd her flowing eye.

And now Eumæus, at the evening hour,
Came, late returning to his silvan bow'r.
Ulysses and his son had dress'd with art
A yearling boar: and gave the gods their part:
Holy repast! That instant from the skies
The martial goddess to Ulysses flies:
She waves her golden wand, and reassumes
From every feature every grace that blooms;
At once his vestures change; at once she sheds
Age o'er his limbs, that tremble as he treads:
Lest to the queen the swain with transport fly,
Unable to contain the' unruly joy.

When near he drew, the prince breaks forth;—‘Pro-
claim

What tidings, friend? what speaks the voice of fame?
Say, if the suitors measure back the main;
Or still in ambush thirst for blood in vain?’

‘Whether (he cries) they measure back the flood,
Or still in ambush thirst in vain for blood,
Escap’d my care: where lawless suitors sway,
(Thy mandate borne) my soul disdain’d to stay.
But from the’ Hermæan height I cast a view,
Where to the port a bark high bounding flew;
Her freight a shining band: with martial air
Each pois’d his shield, and each advanc’d his spear:
And if aright these searching eyes survey,
The’ eluded suitors stem the watery way.’

The prince, well pleas’d to disappoint their wiles,
Steals on his sire a glance, and secret smiles.
And now, a short repast prepar’d, they fed,
Till the keen rage of craving hunger fled:
Then, to repose withdrawn, apart they lay,
And in soft sleep forgot the cares of day.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVII.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus, returning to the city, relates to Penelope the sum of his travels. Ulysses is conducted by Eumæus to the palace: where his old dog Argus acknowledges his master, after an absence of twenty years, and dies with joy. Eumæus returns into the country, and Ulysses remains among the suitors, whose behaviour is described.

SOON as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with roseate light the dewy lawn,
In haste the prince arose, prepar'd to part:
His hand impatient grasps the pointed dart;
Fair on his feet the polish'd sandals shine,
And thus he greets the master of the swine:
 ' My friend, adieu: let this short stay suffice;
I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes,
And end her tears, her sorrows, and her sighs.
But thou, attentive, what we order heed;
This hapless stranger to the city lead;
By public bounty let him there be fed,
And bless the hand that stretches forth the bread.
To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes,
My will may covet, but my power denies.
If this raise anger in the stranger's thought,
The pain of anger punishes the fault.
The very truth I undisguis'd declare;
For what so easy as to be sincere?'
 To this Ulysses: ' What the prince requires,
Of swift removal, seconds my desires,

To want like mine, the peopled town can yield
More hopes of comfort, than the lonely field.
Nor fits my age to till the labour'd lands,
Or stoop to tasks a rural lord demands.
Adieu!—but since this ragged garb can bear
So ill the' inclemencies of morning air,
A few hours' space permit me here to stay:
My steps Eumæus shall to town convey,
With riper beams when Phœbus warms the day.'

Thus he:—nor aught Telemachus replied,
But left the mansion with a lofty stride:
Schemes of revenge his pondering breast elate,
Revolving deep the suitors' sudden fate.
Arriving now before the' imperial hall,
He props his spear against the pillar'd wall:
Then like a lion o'er the threshold bounds;
The marble pavement with his step resounds.
His eye first glanc'd where Euryclea spreads
With furry spoils of beasts the splendid beds:
She saw, she wept, she ran with eager pace,
And reach'd her master with a long embrace.
All crowded round: the family appears
With wild entrancement, and ecstatic tears.
Swift from above descends the royal fair;
(Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air)
Hangs o'er her son; in his embraces dies;
Rains kisses on his neck, his face, his eyes:
Few words she spoke, though much she had to say;
And scarce those few, for tears, could force their way.

'Light of my eyes! he comes! unhop'd-for joy!
Has heaven from Pylos brought my lovely boy?
So snatch'd from all our cares!—Tell, hast thou known
Thy father's fate, and tell me all thy own.'

'O dearest, most rever'd of womankind;
Cease with those tears to melt a manly mind
(Replied the prince); nor be our fates deplor'd,
From death and treason to thy arms restor'd.
Go bathe, and, rob'd in white, ascend the towers;
With all thy handmaids thank the' immortal powers;
To every god vow hecatombs to bleed,
And call Jove's vengeance on their guilty deed:

While to the' assembled council I repair;
A stranger sent by heaven attends me there;
My new-accepted guest I haste to find,
Now to Piræus' honour'd charge consign'd.'

The matron heard, nor was his word in vain.
She bath'd; and rob'd in white, with all her train,
To every god vow'd hecatombs to bleed,
And call'd Jove's vengeance on the guilty deed.
Arm'd with his lance, the prince then pass'd the gate;
Two dogs behind, a faithful guard, await:
Pallas his form with grace divine improves;
The gazing crowd admire him as he moves.
Him, gathering round, the haughty suitors greet
With semblance fair, but inward deep deceit.
Their false addresses generous he denied;
Pass'd on, and sat by faithful Mentor's side;
With Antiphus, and Halitherses sage
(His father's counsellors, rever'd for age).
Of his own fortunes, and Ulysses' fame,
Much ask'd the seniors; till Piræus came.
The stranger-guest pursued him close behind;
Whom when Telemachus beheld, he join'd.
He (when Piræus ask'd for slaves to bring
The gifts and treasures of the Spartan king)
Thus thoughtful answer'd: 'Those we shall not move,
Dark and unconscious of the will of Jove,
We know not yet the full event of all:
Stabb'd in his palace if your prince must fall,
Us and our house if treason must o'erthrow,
Better a friend possess them, than a foe:
If death to these, and vengeance, heaven decree,
Riches are welcome then, not else, to me.
'Till then, retain the gifts.'—The hero said,
And in his hand the willing stranger led.
Then disarray'd, the shining bath they sought,
(With unguents smooth) of polish'd marble wrought.
Obedient handmaids with assistant toil
Supply the limpid wave and fragrant oil:
Then o'er their limbs refulgent robes they threw,
And fresh from bathing to their seats withdrew.
The golden ewer a nymph attendant brings,
Replenish'd from the pure translucent springs;

With copious streams that golden ewer supplies
A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash: the table, in fair order spread,
Is pil'd with viands and the strength of bread.

Full opposite, before the folding gate,

The pensive mother sits in humble state.

Lowly she sat, and with dejected view

The fleecy threads her ivory fingers drew.

The prince and stranger shar'd the genial feast,

Till now the rage of thirst and hunger ceas'd.

When thus the queen :—‘ My son! my only friend!
Say, to my mournful couch shall I ascend?

(The couch deserted now a length of years,

The couch for ever water'd with my tears)

Say wilt thou not (ere yet the suitor-crew

Return, and riot shake our walls anew),

Say wilt thou not the least account afford?

The least glad tidings of my absent lord?’

To her the youth : ‘ We reach'd the Pylian plains,

Where Nestor, shepherd of his people reigns.

All arts of tenderness to him are known,

Kind to Ulysses' race as to his own;

No father with a fonder grasp of joy

Strains to his bosom his long-absent boy.

But all unknown, if yet Ulysses breathe,

Or glide a spectre in the realms beneath:

For further search, his rapid steeds transport

My lengthen'd journey to the Spartan court.

There Argive Helen I beheld; whose charms

(So heaven decreed) engag'd the great in arms.

My cause of coming told, he thus rejoin'd;

And still his words live perfect in my mind:

“ Heavens! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
An absent hero's nuptial joys profane?

So with her young, amid the woodland shades,

A timorous hind the lion's court invades,

Leaves in that fatal lair her tender fawns,

And climbs the cliff, or feeds along the lawns;

Meantime returning, with remorseless sway

The monarch savage rends the panting prey,

With equal fury, and with equal fame,

Shall great Ulysses reassert his claim.

O Jove! supreme! whom men and gods revere;
And thou, whose lustre gilds the rolling sphere!
With power congenial join'd, propitious aid
The chief adopted by the martial maid!
Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
As when, contending on the Lesbian shore,
His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd.
Then soon the' invaders of his bed, and throne,
Their love presumptuous shall by death atone.
Now what you question of my ancient friend,
With truth I answer:—thou the truth attend.
Learn what I heard the sea-born seer relate,
Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.
Sole in an isle, imprison'd by the main,
The sad survivor of his numerous train,
Ulysses lies; detain'd by magic charms,
And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms.
No sailors there, no vessels to convey,
Nor oars to cut the' immeasurable way—"
This told Atrides, and he told no more.
Then safe I voyag'd to my native shore.'

He ceas'd;—nor made the pensive queen reply,
But droop'd her head, and drew a secret sigh.
When Theoclymenus the seer began:
'O suffering consort of the suffering man!
What human knowledge could, those kings might tell;
But I the secrets of high heaven reveal.
Before the first of gods be this declar'd:
Before the board whose blessings we have shar'd;
Witness the genial rites, and witness all
This house holds secret in her ample wall!
E'en now, this instant, great Ulysses, laid
At rest, or wandering in his country's shade,
Their guilty deeds, in hearing and in view,
Secret revolves; and plans the vengeance due.
Of this sure auguries the gods bestow'd,
When first our vessel anchor'd in your road.'

'Succeed those omens, heaven! (the queen rejoin'd)
So shall our bounties speak a grateful mind;
And every envied happiness attend
The man who calls Penelope his friend.'

Thus commun'd they: while in the marble court
(Scene of their insolence) the lords resort.
Athwart the spacious square each tries his art
To whirl the disk, or aim the missile dart.

Now did the hour of sweet repast arrive;
And from the field the victim flocks they drive.
Medon the herald (one who pleas'd them best,
And honour'd with a portion of their feast)
To bid the banquet, interrupts their play.
Swift to the hall they haste; aside they lay
Their garments, and succinct the victim slay.
Then sheep and goats and bristly porkers bled,
And the proud steer was o'er the marble spread.

While thus the copious banquet they provide;
Along the road, conversing side by side,
Proceed Ulysses and the faithful swain:
When thus Eumæus, generous and humane:

'To town, observant of our lord's behest,
Now let us speed; my friend, no more my guest!
Yet like myself I wish'd thee here preferr'd,
Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd.
But much to raise my master's wrath I fear;
The wrath of princes ever is severe.

Then heed his will, and be our journey made
While the broad beams of Phœbus are display'd,
Or ere brown evening spreads her chilly shade.'

'Just thy advice (the prudent chief rejoin'd),
And such as suits the dictate of my mind.
Lead on:—but help me to some staff to stay
My feeble step,—since rugged is the way.'

Across his shoulders then the scrip he flung,
Wide patch'd, and fasten'd, by a twisted thong.
A staff Eumæus gave. Along the way
Cheerly they fare: behind, the keepers stay.
These with their watchful dogs (a constant guard)
Supply his absence, and attend the herd.
And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes;
Alas! how chang'd! a man of miseries!
Propp'd on a staff, a beggar old and bare,
In rags dishonest fluttering with the air!
Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down
The cavern'd way descending to the town,

Where, from the rock, with liquid lapse distils
A limpid fount ; that, spread in parting rills,
Its current thence to serve the city brings :
An useful work ! adorn'd by ancient kings.
Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor there
In sculptur'd stone immortaliz'd their care ;
In marble urns receiv'd it from above,
And shaded with a green surrounding grove ;
Where silver alders, in high arches twin'd,
Drink the cold stream, and tremble to the wind.
Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen
A mossy altar, deep embower'd in green ;
Where constant vows by travellers are paid,
And holy horrors solemnize the shade.

Here with his goats (not vow'd to sacred flame,
But pamper'd luxury), Melanthius came ;
Two grooms attend him. With an envious look
He ey'd the stranger, and imperious spoke :

'The good old proverb how this pair fulfil !
One rogue is usher to another still.
Heaven with a secret principle endued
Mankind, to seek their own similitude.
Where goes the swineherd with that ill-look'd guest ?
That giant-glutton, dreadful at a feast !
Full many a post have those broad shoulders worn,
From every great man's gate repuls'd with scorn :
To no brave prize aspir'd the worthless swain ;
'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.
To beg, than work, he better understands ;
Or we perhaps might take him off thy hands.
For any office could the slave be good,
To cleanse the fold, or help the kid to food ;
If any labour those big joints could learn,
Some whey, to wash his bowels, he might earn.
To cringe, to whine, his idle hands to spread,
Is all, by which that graceless maw is fed.
Yet hear me ! if thy impudence but dare
Approach yon walls, I prophesy thy fare :
Dearly, full dearly shalt thou buy thy bread,
With many a footstool thundering at thy head.'
He thus :—nor insolent of word alone,
Spurn'd with his rustic heel his king unknown ;

Spurn'd, but not mov'd: he, like a pillar stood,
Nor stirr'd an inch, contemptuous, from the road;
Doubtful, or with his staff to strike him dead,
Or greet the pavement with his worthless head.
Short was that doubt:—to quell his rage inur'd,
The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endur'd.
But hateful of the wretch, Eumæus heav'd
His hands obtesting, and this pray'r conceiv'd:
' Daughters of Jove! who from the' etherial bowers
Descend to swell the springs, and feed the flowers!
Nymphs of this fountain! to whose sacred names
Our rural victims mount in blazing flames!
To whom Ulysses' piety preferr'd
The yearly firstlings of his flock, and herd;
Succeed my wish; your votary restore!
O be some god his convoy to our shore!
Due pains shall punish then this slave's offence,
And humble all his airs of insolence,
Who, proudly stalking, leaves the herds at large,
Commences courtier, and neglects his charge.'

' What mutters he? (Melanthius sharp rejoins)
This crafty miscreant big with dark designs?
The day shall come—nay, 'tis already near,—
When, slave! to sell thee at a price too dear,
Must be my care; and hence transport thee o'er;
A load and scandal to this happy shore.
Oh! that as surely great Apollo's dart,
Or some brave suitor's sword, might pierce the heart
Of the proud son; as that we stand this hour
In lasting safety from the father's power.'

So spoke the wretch; but shunning further fray,
Turn'd his proud step, and left them on their way.
Straight to the feastful palace he repair'd,
Familiar enter'd, and the banquet shar'd;
Beneath Eurymachus, his patron lord,
He took his place: and plenty heap'd the board.

Meantime they heard, soft-circling in the sky,
Sweet airs ascend, and heavenly minstrelsy;
(For Phemius to the lyre attun'd the strain)
Ulysses hearken'd, then address'd the swain:

' Well may this palace admiration claim,
Great, and respondent to the master's fame!

Stage above stage the' imperial structure stands,
Holds the chief honours and the town commands :
High walls and battlements the courts enclose,
And the strong gates defy a host of foes.
Far other cares its dwellers now employ ;
The throng'd assembly, and the feast of joy :
I see the smoke of sacrifice aspire,
And hear (what graces every feast) the lyre.'

Then thus Eumæus:—' Judge we which were best ;
Amidst yon revellers a sudden guest
Choose you to mingle, while behind I stay ?
Or I first entering introduce the way ?
Wait for a space without ; but wait not long.
'This is the house of violence and wrong :
Some rude insult thy reverend age may bear ;
For like their lawless lords, the servants are.'

' Just is, O friend ! thy caution, and address'd
(Replied the chief) to no unheeding breast :
The wrongs and injuries of base mankind
Fresh to my sense, and always in my mind.
The bravely-patient to no fortune yields.
On rolling oceans, and in fighting fields,
Storms have I pass'd, and many a stern debate ;
And now in humbler scene submit to fate.
What cannot Want ? the best she will expose ;
And I am learn'd in all her train of woes.
She fills with navies, hosts, and loud alarms,
The sea, the land, and shakes the world with arms !'

Thus, near the gates conferring as they drew,
Argus, the dog, his ancient master knew ;
He, not unconscious of the voice and tread,
Lifts to the sound his ear, and rears his head ! —
Bred by Ulysses, nourish'd at his board ;
But ah ! not fated long to please his lord !
To him, his swiftness and his strength were vain ;
The voice of glory call'd him o'er the main.
Till then in every silvan chase renown'd,
With Argus, Argus, rung the woods around ;
With him the youth pursued the goat or fawn,
Or trac'd the mazy leveret o'er the lawn.
Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
Unhous'd, neglected, in the public way ;

And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
Obscene with reptiles, took his sordid bed.

He knew his lord:—he knew, and strove to meet;
(In vain he strove) to crawl, and kiss his feet;
Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes,
Salute his master, and confess his joys.
Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul:
Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole;
Stole unperceiv'd; he turn'd his head, and dried
The drop humane:—then thus impassion'd cried:

‘What noble beast in this abandon'd state
Lies here all helpless at Ulysses' gate!
His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise;
If, as he seems, he was in better days,
Some care his age deserves: or was he priz'd
For worthless beauty! therefore now despis'd?
Such dogs, and men, there are; mere things of state,
And always cherish'd by their friends, the great.’

‘Not Argus so (Eumæus thus rejoin'd),
But serv'd a master of a nobler kind:
Who never, never shall behold him more!
Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore!
O had you seen him vigorous, bold, and young,
Swift as a stag, and as a lion strong!
Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
None scap'd him, bosom'd in the gloomy wood;
His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
To wind the vapour in the tainted dew!
Such, when Ulysses left his natal coast;
Now years unnerve him, and his lord is lost!
The women keep the generous creature bare;
A sleek and idle race is all their care:
The master gone, the servants what restrains?
Or dwells humanity where riot reigns?
Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.’

This said, the honest herdsman strode before:
The musing monarch pauses at the door;
The dog, whom fate had granted to behold
His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
Takes a last look, and, having seen him, dies;
So clos'd for ever faithful Argus' eyes!

And now Telemachus, the first of all,
Observ'd Eumæus entering in the hall :
Distant he saw, across the shady dome ;
Then gave a sign, and beckon'd him to come.
There stood an empty seat, where late was plac'd,
In order due, the steward of the feast ;
(Who now was busied carving round the board)
Eumæus took, and plac'd it near his lord.
Before him instant was the banquet spread,
And the bright basket pil'd with loaves of bread.

Next came Ulysses, lowly at the door,
A figure despicable, old, and poor,
In squalid vest with many a gaping rent,
Propp'd on a staff, and trembling as he went.
Then, resting on the threshold of the gate,
Against a cypress pillar lean'd his weight ;
(Smooth'd by the workman to a polish'd plain)
The thoughtful son beheld, and call'd his swain.

' These viands, and this bread, Eumæus, bear,
And let yon mendicant our plenty share :
Then let him circle round the suitors' board,
And try the bounty of each gracious lord.
Bold let him ask, encourag'd thus by me ;
How ill, alas ! do want and shame agree ?'

His lord's command the faithful servant bears ;
The seeming beggar answers with his pray'rs.
' Bless'd be Telemachus ! in every deed
Inspire him, Jove ! in every wish succeed !'
This said, the portion from his son convey'd,
With smiles receiving, on his scrip he laid.
Long as the minstrel swept the sounding wire,
He fed ; and ceas'd when silence held the lyre.
Soon as the suitors from the banquet rose,
Minerva prompts the man of mighty woes,
To tempt their bounties with a suppliant's art,
And learn the generous from the' ignoble heart ;
(Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
Dooms to full vengeance all the' offending train)
With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintive sound,
Humble he moves, imploring all around.
The proud feel pity, and relief bestow,
With such an image touch'd of human woe ;

Inquiring all, their wonder they confess,
And eye the man, majestic in distress.

While thus they gaze and question with their eyes,
The bold Melanthius to their thought replies:

‘My lords! this stranger of gigantic port
The good Eumæus usher’d to your court.
Full well I mark’d the features of his face,
Though all unknown his clime, or noble race.’

‘And is this present, swineherd! of thy hand?
Bring’st thou these vagrants to infest the land?
(Returns Antinous with retorted eye)

Objects uncouth! to check the genial joy.
Enough of these our court already grace;
Of giant stomach, and of famish’d face.

Such guests Eumæus to his country brings,
To share our feast, and lead the life of kings!’

To whom the hospitable swain rejoin’d:
‘Thy passion, prince, belies thy knowing mind.
Who calls, from distant nations to his own,
The poor, distinguish’d by their wants alone?
Round the wide world are sought those men divine
Who public structures raise, or who design;
Those to whose eyes the gods their ways reveal,
Or bless with salutary arts to heal;
But chief to poets such respect belongs;
By rival nations courted for their songs:
These states invite, and mighty kings admire,
Wide as the sun displays his vital fire.

It is not so with want!—how few that feed
A wretch unhappy, merely for his need?

Unjust to me and all that serve the state,
To love Ulysses is to raise thy hate.

For me, suffice the approbation won
Of my great mistress, and her godlike son.’

To him Telemachus;—‘No more incense
The man by nature prone to insolence:

Injurious minds just answers but provoke—’

Then turning to Antinous, thus he spoke:

‘Thanks to thy care! whose absolute command
Thus drives the stranger from our court and land.
Heaven bless its owner with a better mind!
From envy free, to charity inclin’d.

This both Penelope and I afford :
Then, prince ! be bounteous of Ulysses' board.
To give another's is thy hand so slow ?
So much more sweet, to spoil, than to bestow ?
 ' Whence, great Telemachus ! this lofty strain ?
 (Antinous cries with insolent disdain)
Portions like mine if every suitor gave,
Our walls this twelvemonth should not see the slave.'
He spoke ; and lifting high above the board
His ponderous footstool, shook it at his lord.
The rest with equal hand conferr'd the bread :
He fill'd his srip, and to the threshold sped ;
But first before Antinous stopp'd, and said :
 ' Bestow, my friend !—thou dost not seem the worst
Of all the Greeks, but princelike and the first :
Then as in dignity, be first in worth ;
And I shall praise thee through the boundless earth.
Once I enjoy'd, in luxury of state,
Whate'er gives man the envied name of great.
Wealth, servants, friends, were mine in better days :
And hospitality was then my praise ;
In every sorrowing soul I pour'd delight,
And poverty stood smiling in my sight.
But Jove, all-governing, whose only will
Determines fate, and mingles good with ill,
Sent me (to punish my pursuit of gain)
With roving pirates o'er the' Egyptian main :
By Egypt's silver flood our ships we moor :
Our spies commission'd straight the coast explore ;
But impotent of mind, with lawless will
The country ravage, and the natives kill.
The spreading clamour to their city flies,
And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise :
The reddening dawn reveals the hostile fields
Horrid with bristly spears, and gleaming shields :
Jove thunder'd on their side : our guilty head
We turn'd to flight ; the gathering vengeance spread
On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lay dead.
Some few the foes in servitude detain ;
Death ill exchange'd for bondage and for pain !
Unhappy me a Cyprian took aboard ;
And gave to Dmetor, Cyprus' haughty lord :

Hither, to scape his chains, my course I steer;
Still curs'd by fortune, and insulted here!

To whom Antinous thus his rage express'd:—
'What god has plagued us with this gormand guest?
Unless at distance, wretch! thou keep behind,
Another isle, than Cyprus more unkind,
Another Egypt, shalt thou quickly find.
From all thou beg'st, a bold audacious slave,
Nor all can give so much as thou canst crave.
Nor wonder I at such profusion shown:—
Shameless they give, who give what's not their own.'

The chief, retiring:—'Souls like that in thee,
Ill suit such forms of grace and dignity.
Nor will that hand to utmost need afford
The smallest portion of a wasteful board,
Whose luxury whole patrimonies sweeps:—
Yet starving want, amidst the riot, weeps.'

The haughty suitor with resentment burns;
And sourly smiling, this reply returns:
'Take that, ere yet thou quit this princely throng:
And dumb for ever be thy slanderous tongue.'
He said, and high the whirling tripod flung.
His shoulder-blade receiv'd the ungentle shock:
He stood, and mov'd not, like a marble rock;
But shook his thoughtful head: nor more complain'd;
Sedate of soul, his character sustain'd,
And inly form'd revenge: then back withdrew;
Before his feet the well-fill'd scrip he threw,
And thus with semblance mild address'd the crew:

'May what I speak your princely minds approve,
Ye peers and rivals in this noble love!
Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.
If, when the sword our country's quarrel draws,
Or if defending what is justly dear,
From Mars impartial some broad wound we bear;
The generous motive dignifies the scar.
But for mere want, how hard to suffer wrong?
Want brings enough of other ills along!
Yet if injustice never be secure,
If fiends revenge, and gods assert the poor,
Death shall lay low the proud aggressor's head,
And make the dust Antinous' bridal bed.'

‘Peace, wretch! and eat thy bread without offence,
(The suitor cried) or force shall drag thee hence,
Scourge through the public street, and cast thee there,
A mangled carcass for the hounds to tear.’

His furious deed the general anger mov’d:
All, e’en the worst, condemn’d; and some reprov’d.
‘Was ever chief for wars like these renown’d?
Ill fits the stranger and the poor to wound.
Unbless’d thy hand!—if in this low disguise
Wander, perhaps, some inmate of the skies;
They (curious oft of mortal actions) deign
In forms like these, to round the earth and main,
Just and unjust recording in their mind,
And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind.’

Telemachus, absorpt in thought severe,
Nourish’d deep anguish, though he shed no tear;
But the dark brow of silent sorrow shook:
While thus his mother to her virgins spoke:
‘On him and his may the bright god of day
That base inhospitable blow repay!’
The nurse replies: ‘If Jove receives my pray’r,
Not one survives to breathe to-morrow’s air.’

‘All, all are foes, and mischief is their end;
Antinous most to gloomy death a friend
(Replies the queen:) the stranger begg’d their grace,
And melting pity soften’d every face;
From every other hand redress he found,
But fell Antinous answer’d with a wound.’
Amidst her maids thus spoke the prudent queen:
Then bade Eumæus call the pilgrim in.—
‘Much of the’ experienc’d man I long to hear;
If or his certain eye, or listening ear,
Have learn’d the fortunes of my wandering lord.’
Thus she;—and good Eumæus took the word:

‘A private audience of thy grace impart,
The stranger’s words may ease the royal heart.
His sacred eloquence in balm distils,
And the sooth’d heart with secret pleasure fills.
Three days have spent their beams, three nights have run
Their silent journey, since his tale begun,
Unfinish’d yet; and yet I thirst to hear!
As when some heaven-taught poet charms the ear,

(Suspending sorrow with celestial strain,
Breath'd from the gods to soften human pain)
Time steals away with unregarded wing,
And the soul hears him, though he cease to sing.

‘Ulysses late he saw, on Cretan ground,
(His father’s guest) for Minos’ birth renown’d.
He now but waits the wind, to waft him o’er,
With boundless treasure, from Thesprotia’s shore.’

To this the queen: ‘The wanderer let me hear,
While yon luxurious race indulge their cheer,
Devour the grazing ox and browsing goat,
And turn my generous vintage down their throat.
For where’s an arm like thine, Ulysses! strong,
To curb wild riot, and to punish wrong?’

She spoke:—Telemachus then sneez’d aloud;
Constrain’d; his nostril echoed through the crowd.
The smiling queen the happy omen bless’d:
‘So may these impious fall, by fate oppress’d!’
Then to Eumæus: ‘Bring the stranger; fly!
And if my questions meet a true reply,
Grac’d with a decent robe he shall retire,
A gift in season which his wants require.’

Thus spoke Penelope. Eumæus flies
In duteous haste, and to Ulysses cries:
‘The queen invites thee, venerable guest!
A secret instinct moves her troubled breast,
Of her long absent lord from thee to gain
Some light, and sooth her soul’s eternal pain.
If true, if faithful thou, her grateful mind
Of decent robes a present has design’d:
So finding favour in the royal eye,
Thy other wants her subjects shall supply.’

‘Fair truth alone (the patient man replied)
My words shall dictate, and my lips shall guide.
To him, to me, one common lot was given,
In equal woes, alas! involv’d by heaven.
Much of his fates I know; but check’d by fear
I stand:—the hand of violence is here:
Here boundless wrongs the starry skies invade,
And injur’d suppliants seek in vain for aid.
Let for a space the pensive queen attend,
Nor claim my story till the sun descend;

Then in such robes as suppliants may require,
Compos'd and cheerful by the genial fire,
When loud uproar and lawless riot cease,
Shall her pleas'd ear receive my words in peace.'

Swift to the queen returns the gentle swain:
'And say, (she cries) does fear, or shame, detain
The cautious stranger? With the begging kind
Shame suits but ill.' Eumæus thus rejoin'd:

'He only asks a more propitious hour,
And shuns (who would not?) wicked men in pow'r;
At evening mild, meet season to confer,
By turns to question, and by turns to hear.'

'Whoe'er this guest (the prudent queen replies)
His every step and every thought is wise.
For men like these on earth he shall not find,
In all the miscreant race of humankind.'

Thus she. Eumæus all her words attends,
And, parting, to the suitor-powers descends:
There seeks Telemachus; and thus apart
In whispers breathes the fondness of his heart:

'The time, my lord, invites me to repair
Hence to the lodge; my charge demands my care.
'These sons of murder thirst thy life to take;
O guard it, guard it, for thy servant's sake!'

'Thanks to my friend, he cries: but now the hour
Of night draws on; go, seek the rural bow'r:
But first refresh: and at the dawn of day
Hither a victim to the gods convey.

Our life to heaven's immortal powers we trust:
Safe in their care; for heaven protects the just.'

Observant of his voice, Eumæus sat
And fed recumbent on a chair of state.
Then instant rose, and as he mov'd along,
'Twas riot all amid the suitor-throng:
They feast, they dance, and raise the mirthful song,
Till now declining toward the close of day,
The sun obliquely shot his dewy ray.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Fight of Ulysses and Irus.

The beggar Irus insults Ulysses ; the suitors promote the quarrel, in which Irus is worsted, and miserably handled. Penelope descends, and receives the presents of the suitors. The dialogue of Ulysses with Eurymachus.

WHILE fix'd in thought the pensive hero sat,
A mendicant approach'd the royal gate ;
A surly vagrant of the giant kind,
The stain of manhood, of a coward mind :
From feast to feast, insatiate to devour,
He flew, attendant on the genial hour.
Him on his mother's knees, when babe he lay,
She nam'd Arnæus on his natal day :
But Irus his associates call'd the boy,
Practis'd, the common messenger, to fly ;
Irus, a name expressive of the' employ.

From his own roof, with meditated blows,
He strove to drive the man of mighty woes.

' Hence, dotard, hence ; and timely speed thy way,
Lest dragg'd in vengeance thou repent thy stay ;
See how with nods assent yon princely train !
But honouring age, in mercy I refrain.

In peace away ! lest, if persuasions fail,
This arm with blows more eloquent prevail.'

To whom, with stern regard :—' Oh, insolence ;
Indecently to rail without offence !

What bounty gives, without a rival share :
I ask, what harms not thee, to breathe this air :
Alike on alms we both precarious live :
And canst thou envy when the great relieve ?
Know from the bounteous heavens all riches flow ;
And what man gives, the gods by man bestow.
Proud as thou art, henceforth no more be proud,
Lest I imprint my vengeance in thy blood ;
Old as I am, should once my fury burn,
How wouldst thou fly, nor e'en in thought return !

‘ Mere woman-glutton ! (thus the churl replied)
A tongue so flippant, with a throat so wide !
Why cease I, gods ! to dash those teeth away,
Like some vile boar's, that, greedy of his prey,
Uproots the bearded corn ?—Rise ; try the fight ;
Gird well thy loins ; approach, and feel my might :
Sure of defeat, before the peers engage ;
Unequal fight ! when youth contends with age !’

Thus in a wordy war their tongues display
More fierce intents, preluding to the fray.

Antinous hears, and in a jovial vein,
Thus with loud laughter to the suitor-train :

‘ This happy day in mirth, my friends, employ :
And lo ! the gods conspire to crown our joy.
See, ready for the fight, and hand to hand,
Yon surly mendicants contentious stand !
Why urge we not to blows ?’—Well pleas'd they spring
Swift from their seats, and, thickening, form a ring.

To whom Antinous :—‘ Lo ! enrich'd with blood,
A kid's well-fatted entrails (tasteful food)
On glowing embers lie ; on him bestow
The choicest portion who subdues his foe ;
Grant him unrivall'd in these walls to stay,
The sole attendant on the genial day.’
The lords applaud : Ulysses then with art,
And fears well-feign'd, disguis'd his dauntless heart :

‘ Worn as I am with age, decay'd with woe ;
Say, is it baseness to decline the foe ?
Hard conflict ! when calamity and age
With vigorous youth, unknown to cares, engage :
Yet fearful of disgrace, to try the day
Imperious hunger bids, and I obey.

But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
Swear to stand neutral, while we cope in fight.'

The peers assent: when straight his sacred head
Telemachus uprais'd, and sternly said:

'Stranger, if prompted to chastise the wrong
Of this bold insolent, confide, be strong!
The' injurious Greek that dares attempt a blow,
That instant makes Telemachus his foe;
And these my friends* shall guard the sacred ties
Of hospitality;—for they are wise.'

Then girding his strong loins, the king prepares
To close in combat, and his body bares;
Broad spread his shoulders; and his nervous thighs
By just degrees, like well-turn'd columns, rise:
Ample his chest; his arms are round and long,
And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong
(Attendant on her chief): the suitor-crowd
With wonder gaze, and gazing speak aloud:

'Irus, alas! shall Irus be no more;
Black fate impends, and this the' avenging hour!
Gods! how his nerves a matchless strength proclaim,
Swell o'er his well-strung limbs, and brace his frame!'

Then, pale with fears, and sickening at the sight,
They dragg'd the unwilling Irus to the fight;
From his blank visage fled the coward blood,
And his flesh trembled as aghast he stood.

'O that such baseness should disgrace the light!
O hide it, death, in everlasting night!

(Exclaims Antinous) can a vigorous foe
Meanly decline to combat age and woe!
But hear me, wretch! if recreant in the fray,
That huge bulk yield this ill-contested day,
Instant thou sail'st, to Echetus resign'd,
A tyrant fiercest of the tyrant-kind;
Who casts thy mangled ears and nose a prey
To hungry dogs, and lops the man away.'

While with indignant scorn he sternly spoke,
In every joint the trembling Irus shook.
Now front to front each frowning champion stands,
And poises high in air his adverse hands.

* Antinous and Eurymachus.

The chief yet doubts, or to the shades below
To fell the giant at one vengeful blow,
Or save his life: and soon his life to save
The king resolves; for mercy sways the brave.
That instant Irus his huge arm extends,
Full on the shoulder the rude weight descends.
The sage Ulysses, fearful to disclose
The hero latent in the man of woes,
Check'd half his might: yet rising to the stroke,
His jaw-bone dash'd; the crashing jaw-bone broke:
Down dropp'd he stupid from the stunning wound;
His feet extended, quivering, beat the ground;
His mouth and nostrils spout a purple flood;
His teeth, all shatter'd, rush immix'd with blood.

The peers transported, as outstretch'd he lies,
With burts of laughter rend the vaulted skies;
Then dragg'd along, all bleeding from the wound,
His length of carcass trailing prints the ground:
Rais'd on his feet, again he reels, he falls,
Till propp'd reclining on the palace walls;
Then to his hand a staff the victor gave,
And thus with just reproach address'd the slave:

'There terrible, affright the dogs, and reign
A dreaded tyrant o'er the bestial train!
But mercy to the poor and stranger show;
Lest heaven in vengeance send some mightier woe.'

Scornful he spoke, and o'er his shoulder flung
The broad-patch'd scrip; the scrip in tatters hung,
Ill join'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
Then, turning short, disdain'd a further stay;
But to the palace measur'd back the way.

There as he rested, gathering in a ring,
The peers with smiles address'd their unknown king:

'Stranger, may Jove and all the aërial powers
With every blessing crown thy happy hours!
Our freedom to thy prowess'd arm we owe
From bold intrusion of thy coward foe;
Instant the flying sail the slave shall wing
To Echetus, the monster of a king.'

While pleas'd he hears, Antinous bears the food,
A kid's well-fatted entrails, rich with blood:

The bread from canisters of shining mold,
Amphinomus; and wines that laugh in gold:
'And oh! (he mildly cries) may heaven display
A beam of glory o'er thy future day!
Alas, the brave too oft is doom'd to bear
The gripes of poverty, and stings of care.'

To whom with thought mature the king replies:
'The tongue speaks wisely, when the soul is wise.
Such was thy father! in imperial state,
Great without vice, that oft attends the great:
Nor from the sire art thou, the son, declin'd:
Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind!
Of all that breathes, or grovelling creeps on earth,
Most vain is man! calamitous by birth.
To-day, with power elate, in strength he blooms;
The haughty creature on that power presumes:
Anon from heaven a sad reverse he feels;
Untaught to bear, 'gainst heaven the wretch rebels.
For man is changeful, as his bliss or woe;
Too high when prosperous; when distress'd too low.
There was a day, when with the scornful great
I swell'd in pomp, and arrogance of state:
Proud of the power that to high birth belongs;
And us'd that power to justify my wrongs.
Then let not man be proud: but firm of mind,
Bear the best humbly, and the worst resign'd;
Be dumb when heaven afflicts! unlike yon train
Of haughty spoilers, insolently vain;
Who make their queen and all her wealth a prey:
But vengeance and Ulysses wing their way.
O may'st thou, favour'd by some guardian pow'r,
Far, far, be distant in that deathful hour!
For sure I am, if stern Ulysses breathe,
These lawless riots end in blood and death.'

Then to the gods the rosy juice he pours,
And the drain'd goblet to the chief restores.
Stung to the soul, o'ercast with holy dread,
He shook the graceful honours of his head:
His boding mind the future woe forestalls:—
In vain; by great Telemachus he falls;
For Pallas seals his doom: all sad he turns
To join the peers; resumes his throne, and mourns.

Meanwhile Minerva with instinctive fires
Thy soul, Penelope, from heaven inspires;
With flattering hopes the suitors to betray,
And seem to meet, yet fly, the bridal day;
Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's to raise,
And crown the mother and the wife with praise.
Then, while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
Thus with a transient smile the matron cries:

‘Eurynomè! to go where riot reigns
I feel an impulse; though my soul disdains:
To my lov'd son the snares of death to show,
And in the traitor-friend unmask the foe;
Who smooth of tongue, in purpose insincere,
Hides fraud in smiles, while death is ambush'd there.

‘Go warn thy son, nor be the warning vain,
(Replied the sagest of the royal train)
But bath'd, anointed, and adorn'd, descend;
Powerful of charms, bid every grace attend;
The tide of flowing tears awhile suppress:
Tears but indulge the sorrow, not repress.
Some joy remains:—to thee a son is given,
Such as in fondness parents ask of heaven.’

‘Ah me! forbear (returns the queen), forbear:
O talk not, talk not of vain beauty's care!
No more I bathe, since he no longer sees
Those charms, for whom alone I wish to please.
The day that bore Ulysses from this coast
Blasted the little bloom these cheeks could boast.
But instant bid Antonoè descend,
Instant Hippodamè our steps attend:
Ill suits it female virtue, to be seen
Alone, indecent, in the walks of men.’

Then while Eurynomè the mandate bears,
From heaven Minerva shoots with guardian cares;
O'er all her senses, as the couch she press'd,
She pours a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest:
With every beauty every feature arms;
Bids her cheeks glow, and lights up all her charms:
In her love-darting eyes awakes the fires;
(Immortal gifts! to kindle soft desires)
From limb to limb an air majestic sheds,
And the pure ivory o'er her bosom spreads.

Such Venus shines, when with a measur'd bound
She smoothly gliding swims the' harmonious round,
When with the graces in the dance she moves,
And fires the gazing gods with ardent loves.
Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends;
And to the queen the damsel-train descends:
Wak'd at their steps, her flowing eyes uncloze;
The tear she wipes, and thus renews her woes:

‘Howe'er 'tis well, that sleep awhile can free
With soft forgetfulness a wretch like me;
Oh! were it given to yield this transient breath!
Send, O Diana, send the sleep of death!
Why must I waste a tedious life in tears,
Nor bury in the silent grave my cares?
O my Ulysses! ever-honour'd name!
For thee I mourn, till death dissolves my frame.’

Thus wailing, slow and sadly she descends:
On either hand a damsel train attends:
Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
Radiant before the gazing peers she stands;
A veil translucent o'er her brow display'd,
Her beauty seems, and only seems, to shade:
Sudden she lightens in their dazzled eyes,
And sudden flames in every bosom rise;
They send their eager souls with every look,
Till silence thus the' imperial matron broke:

‘O why, my son, why now no more appears
That warmth of soul that urg'd thy younger years?
Thy riper days no growing worth impart;
A man in stature, still a boy in heart!
Thy well-knit frame, unprofitably strong,
Speaks thee an hero from an hero sprung:
But the just gods in vain those gifts bestow—
O wise alone in form, and brave in show!
Heavens! could a stranger feel oppression's hand
Beneath thy roof, and couldst thou tamely stand?
If thou the stranger's righteous cause decline,
His is the sufferance, but the shame is thine.’

To whom, with filial awe, the prince returns:
‘That generous soul with just resentment burns.
Yet, taught by time, my heart has learn'd to glow
For others' good, and melt at others' woe:

But impotent these riots to repel,
I bear their outrage, though my soul rebel :
Helpless amid the snares of death I tread,
And numbers leagued in impious union dread.—
But now no crime is theirs: this wrong proceeds
From Irus ; and the guilty Irus bleeds.
O would to Jove! or her whose arms display
The shield of Jove, or him who rules the day!
That yon proud suitors, who licentious tread
These courts, within these courts like Irus bled :
Whose loose head tottering, as with wine oppress'd,
Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breast:
Powerless to move, his staggering feet deny
The coward wretch the privilege to fly.'

Then to the queen Eurymachus replies:
'O justly lov'd, and not more fair than wise!
Should Greece through all her hundred states survey
Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway,
In rival crowds contest the glorious prize,
Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes.
O woman! loveliest of the lovely kind,
In body perfect, and complete in mind!'

'Ah me! (returns the queen) when from this shore
Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more!
The gods decreed these eyes no more should keep
Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep.
Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove,
My virtues last:—my brightest charm is love.
Now, grief, thou all art mine! the gods o'ercast
My soul with woes, that long, ah long, must last!
Too faithfully my heart retains the day
That sadly tore my royal lord away:
He grasp'd my hand, and "Oh, my spouse! I leave
Thy arms (he cried), perhaps to find a grave:
Fame speaks the Trojans bold; they boast the skill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill,
'To dart the spear, and guide the rushing car
With dreadful inroad through the walks of war.
My sentence is gone forth:—and 'tis decreed
Perhaps by righteous heaven that I must bleed!
My father, mother, all, I trust to thee;—
To them, to them transfer the love of me:

But when my son grows man, the royal sway
Resign, and happy be thy bridal day!"
Such were his words and Hymen now prepares
To light his torch and give me up to cares;
The' afflictive hand of wrathful Jove to bear:
A wretch the most complete that breathes the air!
Fallen e'en below the rights to woman due!
Careless to please, with insolence ye woo!
The generous lovers, studious to succeed,
Bid their whole herds and flocks in banquets bleed;
By precious gifts the vow sincere display:
You, only you, make her ye love your prey.'

Well-pleas'd Ulysses hears his queen deceive
The suitor-train, and raise a thirst to give:
False hopes she kindles: but those hopes betray,
And promise, yet elude, the bridal day.

While yet she speaks, the gay Antinous cries,
'Offspring of kings, and more than woman wise!
'Tis right; 'tis man's prerogative to give,
And custom bids thee without shame receive;
Yet never, never, from thy dome we move
Till Hymen lights the torch of spousal love.'

The peers dispatch their heralds to convey
The gifts of love; with speed they take the way.
A robe Antinous gives of shining dyes,
The varying hues in gay confusion rise
Rich from the artist's hand! twelve clasps of gold
Close to the lessening waist the vest infold:
Down from the swelling loins the vest unbound
Floats in bright waves redundant o'er the ground.
A bracelet rich with gold, with amber gay,
That shot effulgence like the solar ray,
Eurymachus presents: and ear-rings bright,
With triple stars that cast a trembling light.
Pisander bears a necklace wrought with art:
And every peer, expressive of his heart,
A gift bestows: this done, the queen ascends,
And slow behind her damsel-train attends.

Then to the dance they form the vocal strain,
Till Hesperus leads forth the starry train;
And now he raises, as the daylight fades,
His golden circlet in the deepening shades

Three vases heap'd with copious fires display
O'er all the palace a fictitious day ;
From space to space the torch wide-beaming burns,
And sprightly damsels trim the rays by turns.

To whom the king:—' Ill suits your sex to stay
Alone with men! ye modest maids, away!
Go, with the queen the spindle guide; or cull
(The partners of her cares) the silver wool;
Be it my task the torches to supply,
E'en till the morning lamp adorns the sky:
E'en till the morning, with unwearied care,
Sleepless I watch:—for I have learn'd to bear.'

Scornful they heard: Melantho, fair and young,
(Melantho, from the loins of Dolius sprung,
Who with the queen her years an infant led,
With the soft fondness of a daughter bred)
Chiefly derides: regardless of the cares
Her queen endures, polluted joys she shares
Nocturnal with Eurymachus!—With eyes
That speak disdain, the wanton thus replies:

' Oh! whither wanders thy distemper'd brain,
Thou bold intruder on a princely train?
Hence to the vagrant's rendezvous repair;
Or shun in some black forge the midnight air.
Proceeds this boldness from a turn of soul,
Or flows licentious from the copious bowl:
Is it that vanquish'd Irus swells thy mind?
A foe may meet thee of a braver kind;
Who, shortening with a storm of blows thy stay,
Shall send thee howling all in blood away?'

To whom with frowns:—' O impudent in wrong!
Thy lord shall curb that insolence of tongue.
Know, to Telemachus I tell the' offence:
The scourge, the scourge shall lash thee into sense.'

With conscious shame they hear the stern rebuke,
Nor longer durst sustain the sovereign look.

Then to the servile task the monarch turns
His royal hands: each torch refulgent burns
With added day: meanwhile in museful mood,
Absorpt in thought, on vengeance fix'd, he stood.
And now the martial maid, by deeper wrongs
To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors' tongues:

Scornful of age, to taunt the virtuous man,
Thoughtless and gay, Eurymachus began:

‘Hear me (he cries) confederates and friends!
Some god, no doubt, this stranger kindly sends:
The shining baldness of his head survey;
It aids our torchlight, and reflects the ray.’

Then to the king that levell’d haughty Troy:—
‘Say if large hire can tempt thee to employ
Those hands in works; to tend the rural trade,
To dress the walk, and form the’ embowering shade?
So food and raiment constant will I give:
But idly thus thy soul prefers to live,
And starve by strolling, not by work to thrive.’

To whom incens’d:—‘Should we, O prince, engage
In rival tasks beneath the burning rage
Of summer suns; were both constrain’d to wield,
Foodless, the scythe along the burden’d field—
Or should we labour, while the ploughshare wounds,
With steers, of equal strength, the’ allotted grounds;
Beneath my labours, how thy wondering eyes
Might see the sable field at once arise!
Should Jove dire war unloose; with spear and shield,
And nodding helm, I tread the’ ensanguin’d field,
Fierce in the van: then wouldst thou, wouldst thou,—
say,—

Misname me glutton, in that glorious day?
No; thy ill-judging thoughts the brave disgrace:
’Tis thou injurious art; not I am base.
Proud to seem brave among a coward train!
But know, thou art not valorous, but vain.
Gods! should the stern Ulysses rise in might,
These gates would seem too narrow for thy flight.’

While yet he speaks, Eurymachus replies,
With indignation flashing from his eyes:
‘Slave, I with justice might deserve the wrong,
Should I not punish that opprobrious tongue,
Irreverent to the great, and uncontroll’d.
Art thou from wine, or innate folly, bold?
Perhaps, these outrages from Irus flow,
A worthless triumph o’er a worthless foe!’

He said, and with full force a footstool threw:
Whirl’d from his arm with erring rage it flew.

Ulysses, cautious of the vengeful foe,
Stoops to the ground, and disappoints the blow.
Not so a youth who deals the goblet round :
Full on his shoulder it inflicts a wound :
Dash'd from his hand the sounding goblet flies ;
He shrieks, he reels, he falls,—and breathless lies.

Then wild uproar and clamour mounts the sky ;
Till mutual thus the peers indignant cry :
' O had this stranger sunk to realms beneath,
To the black realms of darkness and of death,
Ere yet he trod these shores !—To strife he draws
Peer against peer, and what the weighty cause ?
A vagabond !—for him the great destroy,
In vile ignoble jars, the feast of joy.'

To whom the stern Telemachus uprose :—
' Gods ! what wild folly from the goblet flows !
Whence this unguarded openness of soul,
But from the licence of the copious bowl ?
Or heaven delusion sends :—but hence ; away !
Force I forbear, and without force obey.'

Silent, abash'd, they hear the stern rebuke :
Till thus Amphinomus the silence broke :

' True are his words : and he whom truth offends,
Not with Telemachus, but truth, contends ;
Let not the hand of violence invade
The reverend stranger, or the spotless maid ;
Retire we hence !—but crown with rosy wine
The flowing goblet to the powers divine :
Guard he his guest beneath whose roof he stands :
This justice, this the social rite demands.'

The peers assent :—the goblet Mulius crown'd
With purple juice, and bore in order round.
Each peer successive his libation pours
To the bless'd gods that fill the' aërial bow'rs :
Then swill'd with wine, with noise the crowds obey,
And, rushing forth tumultuous, reel away.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Discovery of Ulysses to Euryclea.

Ulysses and his son remove the weapons out of the armory. Ulysses, in conversation with Penelope, gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertained her husband in Crete, and describes exactly his person and address; affirms to have heard of him in Phæacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month. He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea; who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar upon his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus. The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.

CONSULTING secret with the blue-ey'd maid,
Still in the dome divine Ulysses stay'd :
Revenge, mature for act, inflam'd his breast ;
And thus the son, the fervent sire address'd :
 ' Instant convey those stately stores of war
To distant rooms, dispos'd with secret care :
The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
To sooth their fears a specious reason feign :
Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost,
His arms deform'd the roof they wont adorn :
From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.
Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspir'd,
Lest they by sight of swords to fury fir'd,
Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul,
Defame the bridal feast, and friendly bowl.'

The prince obedient to the sage command,
To Euryclea thus:—‘The female band
In their apartments keep: secure the doors:
These swarthy arms among the covert stores
Are seemlier hid; my thoughtless youth they blame,
Imbrown’d with vapour of the smouldering flame.’

‘In happy hour (pleas’d Euryclea cries)
Tutor’d by early woes, grow early wise!
Inspect with sharpen’d sight, and frugal care,
Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.
But who the lighted taper will provide,
(The female train retir’d) your toils to guide?’

‘Without infringing hospitable right,
This guest (he cried) shall bear the guiding light.
I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast;
They share the meal that earn it ere they taste.’

He said:—from female ken she straight secures
The purpos’d deed, and guards the bolted doors:
Auxiliar to his son Ulysses bears
The plummy-crested helms, and pointed spears,
With shields indented deep in glorious wars.
Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
And with her golden lamp his toil befriends.
Not such the sickly beams, which unsincere
Gild the gross vapour of this nether sphere!
A present deity the prince confess’d,
And rapp’d with ecstasy the sire address’d:

‘What miracle thus dazzles with surprise!
Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise:
The walls, where’er my wondering sight I turn,
And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn!
Some visitant of pure ethereal race
With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.’

‘Be calm, (replies the sire) to none impart,
But oft revolve the vision in thy heart.
Celestials, mantled in excess of light,
Can visit unapproach’d by mortal sight.
Seek thou repose; whilst here I sole remain,
To’ explore the conduct of the female train:
The pensive queen perchance desires to know
The series of my toils, to sooth her woe.’

With tapers flaming day his train attends;
His bright alcove the' obsequious youth ascends:
Soft slumbrous shades his drooping eyelids close,
Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses stay'd
In council secret with the martial maid,
Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait
The queen, descending from her bower of state.
Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.
An ivory seat with silver ringlets grac'd,
By fam'd Icmalius wrought, the menials plac'd:
With ivory silver'd thick the footstool shone,
O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
The sovereign seat with graceful air she press'd.
To different tasks their toil the nymphs address'd:
The golden goblets some, and some restor'd
From stains of luxury the polish'd board:
These to remove the' expiring embers came,
While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mien
Renew'd the' attack, incontinent of spleen:
'Avaunt (she cried) offensive to my sight!
Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night,
Into the woman-state asquint to pry;
A day-devourer, and an evening spy!
Vagrant, begone! before this blazing brand
Shall urge'—and wav'd it hissing in her hand.

The' insulted hero rolls his wrathful eyes,
And, 'Why so turbulent of soul? (he cries)
Can these lean shrivel'd limbs, unnerv'd with age,
These poor but honest rags, enkindle rage?
In crowds, we wear the badge of hungry fate;
And beg, degraded from superior state!
Constrain'd! a rent-charge on the rich I live;
Reduc'd to crave the good I once could give.
A palace, wealth, and slaves I late possess'd,
And all that makes the great be call'd the bless'd:
My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
Embrac'd the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.
Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid!
'Tis Jove's high will; and be his will obey'd!

Nor think thyself exempt:—that rosy prime
Must share the general doom of withering time.
To some new channel soon, the changeful tide
Of royal grace the' offended queen may guide;
And her lov'd lord unplume thy towering pride.
Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware:
Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care;
Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys;
Potent to punish what he cannot praise.'

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sovereign's ear:—
'Loquacious insolent! (she cries), forbear:
To thee the purpose of my soul I told;
Venial discourse, unblam'd, with him to hold:
The storied labours of my wandering lord,
To sooth my grief he haply may record.
Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung:
Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue!
But thou, on whom my palace cares depend,
Eurynomè, regard the stranger-friend:
A seat, soft spread with furry spoils, prepare;
Due distant, for us both to speak and hear.'

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste:
A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she plac'd:
Due distant for discourse the hero sat;
When thus the sovereign from her chair of state:
'Reveal, obsequious to my first demand,
Thy name, thy lineage, and thy native land.'

He thus: 'O queen! whose far resounding fame
Is bounded only by the starry frame,
Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
Whose pious rule a warlike race obey!
In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd;
'Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd:
With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stor'd;
And fish of every fin thy seas afford:
Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess,
And bless the power that still delights to bless.
Gracious permit this prayer, imperial dame!
Forbear to know my lineage, or my name:
Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep;
In sweet oblivion let my sorrows sleep!

My woes awak'd will violate your ear;
And to this gay censorious train appear
A winy vapour melting in a tear.'

' Their gifts the gods resum'd (the queen rejoin'd),
Exterior grace, and energy of mind,
When the dear partner of my nuptial joy
Auxiliar troops combin'd, to conquer Troy.
My lord's protecting hand alone would raise
My drooping verdure, and extend my praise!
Peers from the distant Samian shore resort;
Here, with Dulicians join'd, besiege the court:
Zacynthus, green with ever shady groves,
And Ithaca, presumptuous, boast their loves:
Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
They press the hymenæan rite abhorr'd.
Misrule thus mingling with domestic cares,
I live regardless of my state affairs:
Receive no stranger guest, no poor relieve;
But ever for my lord in secret grieve!—
This art, instinct by some celestial power,
I tried, elusive of the bridal hour:
"Ye peers, (I cry) who press to gain a heart
Where dead Ulysses claims no future part,
Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
Till this funereal web my labours end:
Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
A pall of state, the ornament of death.
For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
With just reproach were licens'd to defame,
Should he, long honour'd in supreme command,
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."
The fiction pleas'd! their loves I long elude;
The night still ravel'd, what the day renew'd.
Three years successful in my art conceal'd,
My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd:
Befriended by my own domestic spies,
The woof unwrought the suitor-train surprise.
From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
And fear forbids to falsify the brede.
My anxious parents urge a speedy choice,
And to their suffrage gain the filial voice:

For rule mature, Telemachus deplores
His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores—
But, stranger! as thy days seem full of fate,
Divide discourse; in turn thy birth relate:
'Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race;
No poor unfather'd product of disgrace.'

'Princess! (he cries), renew'd by your command,
The dear remembrance of my native land,
Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source;
And tears repeat their long-forgotten course!
So pays the wretch, whom fate constrains to roam,
The dues of nature to his natal home!—
But inward on my soul let sorrow prey;
Your sovereign will my duty bids obey.

'Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil!
And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle:
Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
In various tongues avow their various claims:
Cydonians, dreadful with the bended yew,
And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due:
The Dorians, plum'd amid the files of war,
Her foodful glebe with fierce Achaians share:
Cnossus, her capital of high command;
Where sceptred Minos with impartial hand
Divided right; each ninth revolving year,
By Jove receiv'd in council to confer.
His son Deucalion bore successive sway;
His son, who gave me first to view the day!
'The royal bed an elder issue bless'd,
Idomeneus; whom Ilian fields attest
Of matchless deed: untrain'd to martial toil
I liv'd inglorious in my native isle,
Studious of peace; and Æthon is my name.
'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came;
For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
To bright Lucina's fane; the shelfy coast
Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.
His vessels moor'd, (an incommodious port!)
The hero speeded to the Cnossian court:
Ardent the partner of his arms to find;
In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.

Vain hope! ten suns had warm'd the western strand
Since my brave brother with his Cretan band
Had sail'd for Troy: but to the genial feast
My honour'd roof receiv'd the royal guest.
Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
A public treat, with jars of generous wine.
Twelve days, while Boreas vex'd the' aërial space,
My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace:
And when the north had ceas'd the stormy roar,
He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore.'

Thus the fam'd hero, perfected in wiles,
With fair similitude of truth beguiles
The queen's attentive ear: dissolv'd in woe,
From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow.
As snows collected on a mountain freeze,
When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,
The fleecy pile obeys the whispering gales,
Ends in a stream, and murmurs through the vales:
So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,
Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd:
She to her present lord laments him lost,
And views that object which she wants the most!
Withering at heart to see the weeping fair,
His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare:
Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;
Firm wisdom interdicts the softening tear.
A speechless interval of grief ensues,
Till thus the queen the tender theme renews:

'Stranger! that e'er thy hospitable roof
Ulysses grac'd, confirm by faithful proof:
Delineate to my view my warlike lord;
His form, his habit, and his train record.'

'Tis hard, (he cries) to bring to sudden sight
Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight:
Rare on the mind those images are trac'd,
Whose footsteps twenty winters have defac'd:
But what I can, receive:—In ample mode,
A robe of military purple flow'd
O'er all his frame: illustrious on his breast
The double-clasping gold the king confess'd;

In the rich woof a hound, Mosaic drawn,
Bore on full stretch, and seiz'd a dappled fawn:
Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold;
They pant, and struggle in the moving gold.
Fine as a filmy web, beneath it shone
A vest, that dazzled like a cloudless sun:
The female train, who round him throng'd to gaze,
In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.
A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
I gave, enamell'd with Vulcanian art:
A mantle purple-ting'd, and radiant vest,
Dimension'd equal to his size, express'd
Affection grateful to my honour'd guest.
A favourite herald in his train I knew,
His visage solemn sad, of sable hue;
Short woolly curls o'erfleec'd his bending head,
O'er which a promontory-shoulder spread:
Eurybates! in whose large soul alone
Ulysses view'd an image of his own.'

His speech the tempest of her grief restor'd;
In all he told she recogniz'd her lord:
But when the storm was spent in plenteous showers,
A pause inspiriting her languish'd powers;
'O thou, (she cried) whom first inclement fate
Made welcome to my hospitable gate;
With all thy wants the name of poor shall end;
Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend!
The vest much envied on your native coast,
And regal robe with figur'd gold emboss'd,
In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
When my lov'd lord this blissful bower enjoy'd:
The fall of Troy, erroneous and forlorn
Doom'd to survive, and never to return!'

Then he, with pity touch'd: 'O royal dame!
Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
From the devouring rage of grief reclaim.
I not the fondness of your soul reprove
For such a lord! who crown'd your virgin love
With the dear blessing of a fair increase;
Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace:
Yet while I speak, the mighty woe suspend:
Truth forms my tale; to pleasing truth attend.

The royal object of your dearest care
Breathes in no distant clime the vital air;
In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd:
Without retinue, to that friendly shore
Welcom'd with gifts of price, a sumless store!
His sacrilegious train, who dar'd to prey
On herds devoted to the god of day,
Were doom'd by Jove, and Phœbus' just decree,
To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.
To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,
And rode the storm; till, by the billows toss'd,
He landed on the fair Phæacian coast.
That race, who emulate the life of gods,
Receive him joyous to their bless'd abodes:
Large gifts confer; a ready sail command,
To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.
But your wise lord (in whose capacious soul
High schemes of power in just succession roll)
His Ithaca refus'd from favouring fate,
Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.
Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sovereign sway
Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey:
And bade the gods this added truth attest,
(While pure libations crown'd the genial feast)
That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,
To waft the hero to his natal land.
I for Dulichium urge the watery way;
But first the Ulyssean wealth survey:
So rich the value of a store so vast,
Demands the pomp of centuries to waste!
The darling object of your royal love,
Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove;
By the sure precept of the silvan shrine,
To form the conduct of his great design:
Irresolute of soul, his state to shroud
In dark disguise, or come a king avow'd,
Thus lives your lord: nor longer doom'd to roam,
Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.
By Jove, the source of good, supreme in power!
By the bless'd genius of this friendly bower!

I ratify my speech : before the sun
His annual longitude of heaven shall run ;
When the pale empress of yon starry strain
In the next month renews her faded wane,
Ulysses will assert his rightful reign.'

'What thanks, what boon, (replied the queen) are due,
When time shall prove the storied blessing true !
My lord's return should fate no more retard,
Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.
But my prophetic fears, alas ! presage
The wounds of destiny's relentless rage.
I long must weep ! nor will Ulysses come,
With royal gifts, to send you honour'd home !—
Your other task, ye menial train, forbear :
Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare ;
With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn :
Uprising early with the purple morn,
His sinews shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.
Then with Telemachus the social feast
Partaking free, my sole invited guest,
Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due,
The breach of hospitable right may rue.
The vulgar of my sex I most exceed,
In real fame, when most humane my deed :
And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,
If, stranger ! I permit that mean attire,
Beneath the feastful bower.—A narrow space
Confines the circle of our destin'd race ;
'Tis ours, with good the scanty round to grace.
Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
Dreaded in life, the mutter'd curse pursues ;
By death disrob'd of all their savage pow'rs,
'Then, licens'd rage her hateful prey devours.
But he whose inborn worth his acts commend,
Of gentle soul, to human race a friend ;—
The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame,
And distant tongues extol the patron name.'

'Princess, (he cried) in vain your bounties flow
On me, confirm'd and obstinate in woe.
When my lov'd Crete receiv'd my final view,
And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew,

These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd)
I chose, the livery of a woful mind!
Nor will my heart-corroding cares abate
With splendid palls and canopies of state:
Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn,
And catch the glances of the waking morn.
The delicacy of your courtly train
To wash a wretched wanderer would disdain:
But if, in track of long experience tried,
And sad similitude of woes allied,
Some wretch reluctant views aërial light,
To her mean hand assign the friendly rite.'

Pleas'd with his wise reply, the queen rejoin'd:
'Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,
In all who grac'd this hospitable bow'r,
I ne'er discern'd before this social hour.
Such servant as your humble choice requires,
To light receiv'd the lord of my desires,
New from the birth: and with a mother's hand
His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd:
Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind;
Though now to life's extremest verge declin'd,
Of strength superior to the toil assign'd.—
Rise, Euryclea! with officious care
For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare:
This debt his correspondent fortunes claim:
Too like Ulysses!—and perhaps the same!
Thus, old with woes my fancy paints him now!
For age untimely marks the careful brow.'

Instant, obsequious to the mild command,
Sad Euryclea rose: with trembling hand
She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes;
And thus impassion'd to herself replies:

'Son of my love, and monarch of my cares!
What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears!
Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid,
With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid?
He never dar'd defraud the sacred fane
Of perfect hecatombs in order slain:
There oft implor'd his tutelary pow'r,
Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour;
That, form'd for empire with paternal care,
His realm might recognize an equal heir.

O destin'd head ! The pious vows are lost ;
His god forgets him on a foreign coast !—
Perhaps, like thee, poor guest ! in wanton pride
The rich insult him, and the young deride !
Conscious of worth revil'd, thy generous mind
The friendly rite of purity declin'd ;
My will concurring with my queen's command,
Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.
A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast ;
In thy whole form Ulysses seems express'd :
Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
None imag'd e'er like thee my master lost.'

Thus half discover'd through the dark disguise,
With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies:
' You join your suffrage to the public vote ;
The same you think, have all beholders thought.'

He said : replenish'd from the purest springs,
The laver straight with busy care she brings :
In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
The boiling fluid temperates the cold.
Meantime revolving in his thoughtful mind
The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd,
His face averting from the crackling blaze,
His shoulders intercept the' unfriendly rays.
Thus cautious in the' obscure he hop'd to fly
The curious search of Euryclea's eye.

Cautious in vain ! nor ceas'd the dame to find
The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd.

This on Parnassus (combating the boar)
With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
Attended by his brave maternal race,
His grandsire sent him to the silvan chase,
Autolycus the bold (a mighty name
For spotless faith, and deeds of martial fame :
Hermes, his patron-god, those gifts bestow'd,
Whose shrine with weanling lambs he wont to load.)
His course to Ithaca this hero sped,
When the first product of Laertes' bed
Was new disclos'd to birth ; the banquet ends,
When Euryclea from the queen descends,
And to his fond embrace the babe commends.

‘ Receive (she cries) your royal daughter’s son ;
And name the blessing that your prayers have won.’
Then thus the hoary chief:—‘ My victor arms
Have aw’d the realms around with dire alarms :
A sure memorial of my dreaded fame
The boy shall bear ; Ulysses be his name !
And when with filial love the youth shall come
To view his mother’s soil, my Delphic dome
With gifts of price shall send him joyous home.’
Lur’d with the promis’d boon, when youthful prime
Ended in man, his mother’s natal clime
Ulysses sought ; with fond affection dear
Amphithea’s arms receiv’d the royal heir :
Her ancient lord * an equal joy possess’d ;
Instant he bade prepare the genial feast :
A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled,
Whose stately growth five flowery summers fed :
His sons divide, and roast with artful care
The limbs : then all the tasteful viands share.
Nor ceas’d discourse (the banquet of the soul)
Till Phœbus, wheeling to the western goal,
Resign’d the skies, and night involv’d the pole.
Their drooping eyes the slumbrous shade oppress’d,
Sated they rose, and all retir’d to rest.

Soon as the Morn, new-rob’d in purple light,
Pierc’d with her golden shafts the rear of night ;
Ulysses, and his brave maternal race,
The young Autolyçi, assay the chase.
Parnassus, thick-perplex’d with horrid shades,
With deep-mouth’d hounds the hunter-troop invades ;
What time the sun, from ocean’s peaceful stream,
Darts o’er the lawn his horizontal beam.
The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale ;
The thorny wilds the woodmen fierce assail ;
And foremost of the train, his cornel spear
Ulysses wav’d, to rouse the savage war.
Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood ;
Nor winter’s boreal blast, nor thunderous shower,
Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bower,

* Autolycus.

With wither'd foliage strew'd, a heapy store ;
The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar !
Rous'd by the hounds' and hunters' mingling cries,
The savage from his leafy shelter flies :
With fiery glare his sanguine eyeballs shine,
And bristles high empale his horrid chine.
Young Ithacus advanc'd, defies the foe,
Poising his lifted lance in act to throw ;
The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
And springs impetuous with opponent speed !
His tusks oblique he aim'd, the knee to gore ;
Aslope they glanc'd, the sinewy fibres tore,
And bar'd the bone :—Ulysses, undismay'd,
Soon with redoubled force the wound repay'd :
To the right shoulder-joint the spear applied,
His further flank with streaming purple dyed :
On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain.
With joy, and vast surprise, the' applauding train
View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain.
With bandage firm Ulysses' knee they bound ;
Then chanting mystic lays, the closing wound
Of sacred melody confess'd the force ;
The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim :
Autolycus, enamour'd with his fame,
Confirm'd the cure ; and from the Delphic dome
With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
He safe at Ithaca with joy receiv'd,
Relates the chase, and early praise achiev'd.

Deep o'er his knee inseam'd, remain'd the scar :
Which noted token of the woodland war
When Euryclea found, the' ablution ceas'd ;
Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand releas'd :
The mingled fluids from the vase redound ;
The vase reclining floats the floor around !
Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express'd
Of grief and joy, alternate in her breast.
Her fluttering words in melting murmurs died ;
At length abrupt—' My son !—my king '—she cried.
His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,
Full on the queen her raptur'd eye she cast,

Ardent to speak the monarch safe restor'd :
But, studious to conceal her royal lord,
Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
And from the present bliss abstracts her thought.
His hand to Euryclea's mouth applied,
' Art thou foredoom'd my pest? (the hero cried :)
Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd :
And have the fates thy babbling age ordain'd
To violate the life thy youth sustain'd ?
An exile have I told, with weeping eyes,
Full twenty annual suns in distant skies :
At length return'd, some god inspires thy breast
To know thy king, and here I stand confess'd.
This heaven-discover'd truth to thee consign'd,
Reserve, the treasure of thy inmost mind :
Else if the gods my vengeful arm sustain,
And prostrate to my sword the suitor-train,
With their lewd mates thy undistinguish'd age
Shall bleed, a victim to vindictive rage.'

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear :
' What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe ?
Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd ;
With ribs of steel, and marble heart immur'd.
When heaven, auspicious to thy right avow'd,
Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-crowd,
The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair ;
The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare.'

' Thy aid avails me not, (the chief replied)
My own experience shall their doom decide ;
A witness-judge precludes a long appeal ;
Suffice it thee thy monarch to conceal.'

He said : obsequious with redoubled pace,
She to the fount conveys the' exhausted vase :
The bath renew'd, she ends ths pleasing toil
With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil.
Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,
His former seat receiv'd the stranger-guest ;
Whom thus with pensive air the queen address'd :

' Though night, dissolving grief in grateful ease,
Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize,
Awhile, reluctant to her pleasing force,
Suspend the restful hour with sweet discourse.

The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy!)
My menials, and domestic cares employ :
And, unattended by sincere repose,
The night assists my ever-wakeful woes :
When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.
As when the months are clad in flowery green,
Sad Philomel, in bowery shades unseen,
To vernal airs attunes her varied strains,
And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains :
Young Itylus, his parent's darling joy !
Whom chance misled the mother to destroy :
Now doom'd a wakeful bird, to wail the beauteous boy.
So in nocturnal solitude forlorn,
A sad variety of woes I mourn !
My mind, reflective in a thorny maze
Devious from care to care incessant strays.
Now, wavering doubt succeeds to long despair :
Shall I my virgin nuptial vow revere ;
And joining to my son's my menial train,
Partake his councils, and assist his reign ?
Or, since mature in manhood, he deplores
His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores ;
Shall I, reluctant ! to his will accord,
And from the peers select the noblest lord ;
So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
These wasteful love-debates, a mourning bride ?
A visionary thought I'll now relate ;
Illustrate, if you know, the shadow'd fate.
'A team of twenty geese (a snow-white train!)
Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
Amuse my pensive hours. The bird of Jove
Fierce from his mountain-eyry downward drove ;
Each favourite fowl he pounc'd with deathful sway,
And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
My pitying eyes effus'd a plenteous stream,
To view their death thus imag'd in a dream :
With tender sympathy to sooth my soul,
A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole.
But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd :

Perch'd on the battlements, he thus began
(In form an eagle, but in voice a man:)

“ O queen ! no vulgar vision of the sky
I come, prophetic of approaching joy:
View in this plummy form thy victor lord ;
The geese (a glutton race) by thee deplor'd,
Portend the suitors fated to my sword.”

This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceas'd.
When from the downy bands of sleep releas'd,
Fast by the limpid lake my swan-like train
I found, insatiate of the golden grain.’

‘ The vision, self-explain'd, (the chief replies)
Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies:
Ulysses speaks his own return decreed,
And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed.’

‘ Hard is the task, and rare (the queen rejoin'd)
Impending destinies in dreams to find !
Immur'd within the silent bower of sleep,
Two portals firm the various phantoms keep:
Of ivory one ; whence flit, to mock the brain,
Of winged lies a light fantastic train:
The gate oppos'd pellucid valves adorn,
And columns far incas'd with polish'd horn ;
Where images of truth for passage wait,
With visions manifest of future fate.
Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,
Which spoke Ulysses to his realm restor'd:
Delusive semblance !——But my remnant life
Heaven shall determine in a gameful strife:
With that fam'd bow Ulyssés taught to bend,
For me the rival archers shall contend.

As on the listed field he us'd to place
Six beams, oppos'd to six in equal space ;
Elanc'd afar by his unerring art,
Sure through six circlets flew the whizzing dart:
So, when the sun restores the purple day,
Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay:
To him the spousal honour is decreed,
Who through the rings directs the feather'd reed.
Torn from these walls (where long the kinder pow'rs
With pomp and joy have wing'd my youthful hours!)

On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam ;
The pleasure past supplies a copious theme
For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful dream !

‘ Propose the sportive lot, (the chief replies)
Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer’s prize :
Ulysses will surprise the’ unfinish’d game
Avow’d, and falsify the suitors’ claim.’

To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin’d :
‘ In all thy speech what pleasing force I find !
O’er my suspended woe thy words prevail ;
I part reluctant from the pleasing tale.
But heaven, that knows what all terrestrials need,
Repose to night, and toil to day decreed :
Grateful vicissitude !—Yet me withdrawn,
Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn,
Establish’d use enjoins ; to rest and joy
Estrang’d, since dear Ulysses sail’d to Troy !
Meantime instructed is the menial tribe
Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.’

Thus affable, her bower the queen ascends ;
The sovereign step a beauteous train attends :
There imag’d to her soul Ulysses rose ;
Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows :
Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
And o’er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

ARGUMENT.

While Ulysses lies in the vestibule of the palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women. Minerva comforts him, and casts him asleep. At his awaking, he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted. The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people : and the suitors banquet in the palace. Telemachus exerts his authority amongst them : notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesippus, and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the wooers.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed
(The remnants of the spoils the suitor-crowd
In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd.)
Then o'er the chief, Eurynomè the chaste
With duteous care a downy carpet cast ;
With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
And, ruminating wrath, he scorns repose.
As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey,
Whilst to nocturnal joys impure repair,
With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.
His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
Wavering his thoughts in dubious balance hung,
Or, instant should he quench the guilty flame
With their own blood, and intercept the shame,
Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
And let the peers consummate the disgrace.

Round his swoln heart the murmurous fury rolls ;
As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls,
And bays the stranger-groom : so wrath compress'd
Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.

‘ Poor suffering heart ! (he cried) support the pain
Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.

Not fiercer woes thy fortitude could foil,
When the brave partners of thy ten years' toil
Dire Polypheme devour'd :—I then was freed,
By patient prudence, from the death decreed.’

Thus anchor'd safe on reason's peaceful coast,
Tempests of wrath his soul no longer toss'd ;
Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd :
As one who long with pake-ey'd famine pin'd,
The savoury cates, on glowing embers cast,
Incessant turns, impatient for repast ;
Ulysses so, from side to side devolv'd,
In self-debate the suitors' doom resolv'd.
When in the form of mortal nymph array'd,
From heaven descends the Jove-born martial maid ;
And hovering o'er his head, in view confess'd,
The goddess thus her favourite care address'd :

‘ O thou, of mortals most inur'd to woes ;
Why roll those eyes unfriended of repose ?
Beneath thy palace-roof forget thy care ;
Bless'd in thy queen ! bless'd in thy blooming heir !
Whom, to the gods when suppliant fathers bow,
They name, the standard of their dearest vow.’

‘ Just is thy kind reproach (the chief rejoin'd)
Deeds full of fate distract my various mind,
In contemplation wrapp'd.—This hostile crew
What single arm hath prowess to subdue ?
Or if by Jove's, and thy auxiliar aid,
They're doom'd to bleed, O say, celestial maid,
Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain,
Nations embattled to revenge the slain ?’

‘ Oh impotence of faith ! (Minerva cries)
If man on frail unknowing man relies,
Doubt you the gods ?—Lo Pallas' self descends,
Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.
In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast :
Though myriads leagued thy rightful claim contest,

My sure divinity shall bear the shield,
And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.
Now, pay the debt to craving nature due;
Her faded powers with balmy rest renew.
She ceas'd: ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes;
His care dissolves in visionary joys:
The goddess, pleas'd, regains her natal skies.

Not so the queen: the downy bands of sleep
By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to weep;
A gloomy pause ensued of dumb despair——
Then thus her fate invok'd, with fervent prayer:

‘ Diana! speed thy deathful ebon dart,
And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.
Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! far from human race,
Toss'd through the void illimitable space:
Or if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
Me with his whelming wave let ocean shroud!
So, Pandarus, thy hopes, three orphan fair
Were doom'd to wander through the devious air;
Thyself untimely and thy consort died:
But four celestials both your cares supplied.
Venus in tender delicacy rears
With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years:
Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
A form majestic, and sagacious mind:
With shapely growth Diana grac'd their bloom;
And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.
But whilst to learn their lots in nuptial love,
Bright Cytherea sought the bower of Jove,
(The god supreme, to whose eternal eye
The registers of fate expanded lie)
Wing'd harpies snatch'd the' unguarded charge away,
And to the furies bore a grateful prey.
Be such my lot! Or thou Diana speed
Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead:
To seek my lord among the warrior-train,
Ere second vows my bridal faith profane.
When woes the waking sense alone assail,
Whilst Night extends her soft oblivious veil,
Of other wretches' care the torture ends:
No truce the warfare of my heart suspends!
The night renews the day-distracting theme,
And airy terrors sable every dream.

The last alone a kind illusion wrought;
And to my bed my lov'd Ulysses brought,
In manly bloom, and each majestic grace,
As when for Troy he left my fond embrace;
Such raptures in my beating bosom rise,
I deem it sure a vision of the skies.'

Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne,
In audible laments she breathes her moan;
The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear;
Mis-judging of the cause, a sudden fear
Of his arrival known, the chief alarms;
He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms.
Up springing from his couch, with active haste
The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd;
(The hide without imbib'd the morning air)
And thus the gods invok'd, with ardent pray'r:

'Jove, and etherial thrones! with heaven to friend,
If the long series of my woes shall end,
Of human race now rising from repose,
Let one a blissful omen here disclose;
And to confirm my faith, propitious Jove!
Vouchsafe the sanction of a sign above.'

Whilst lowly thus the chief adoring bows,
The pitying god his guardian aid avows.
Loud from a sapphire sky his thunder sounds:
With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.
Soon, with consummate joy to crown his pray'r,
An omen'd voice invades his ravish'd ear.
Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind:
Task'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
From the pure flower (the growth and strength of man),
Discharging to the day the labour due,
Now early to repose the rest withdrew;
One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind,
And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd:

'Father of gods and men! whose thunders roll
O'er the cerulean vault, and shake the pole;
Whoe'er from heaven has gain'd this rare ostent
(Of granted vows a certain signal sent),
In this bless'd moment of accepted pray'r,
Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care!

Instant, O Jove! confound the suitor-train,
For whom o'er-toil'd I grind the golden grain:
Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast,
And be this festival decreed their last!

Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
Meantime the menial train with unctuous wood
Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian food:
When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir;
With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
A radiant sabre grac'd his purple zone,
And on his foot the golden sandal shone.
His steps impetuous to the portal press'd;
And Euryclea thus he there address'd:

' Say, thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
Was care for due refection, and repose,
Bestow'd the stranger-guest? Or waits he griev'd,
His age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd?
Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers
(In woes bewilder'd, oft the wisest errs;)
The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
And modest worth with noble scorn retires.'

She thus: ' O cease that ever-honour'd name
To blemish now; it ill deserves your blame:
A bowl of generous wine suffic'd the guest;
In vain the queen the night-refection press'd;
Nor would he court repose in downy state,
Unbless'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate!
A hide beneath the portico was spread,
And fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed:
A downy carpet cast with duteous care,
Secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.'

His cornel javelin pois'd, with regal port,
To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court,
Forth issuing from the dome the prince repair'd:
Two dogs of chase, a lion-hearted guard,
Behind him sourly stalk'd. Without delay
The dame divides the labour of the day;
Thus urging to the toil the menial train:
' What marks of luxury the marble stain!
Its wonted lustre let the floor regain:
The seats with purple clothe in order due;
And let the' abstersive sponge the board renew:

Let some refresh the vase's sullied mould;
Some bid the goblets boast their native gold:
Some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,
And copious waters pure for bathing bear.
Dispatch! for soon the suitors will assay
The lunar feast-rites to the god of day.'

She said; with duteous haste a bevy fair
Of twenty virgins to the spring repair:
With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.
Some wield the sounding axe; the dodder'd oaks
Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.
Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
(Eumæus in their train), the maids return.
Three porkers for the feast, all brawny-chin'd,
He brought the choicest of the tusky kind:
In lodgments first secure his care he view'd,
'Then to the king this friendly speech renew'd:
'Now say sincere, my guest! the suitor-train
Still treat thy worth with lordly dull disdain;
Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane?'

'Some pitying god (Ulysses sad replied)
With vollied vengeance blast their towering pride!
No conscious blush, no sense of right restrains
The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins:
From vice to vice their appetites are toss'd;
All cheaply sated at another's cost!'

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
Spontaneous to the suitors' feast preferr'd:
Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound;
With quavering cries the vaulted roofs resound:
And to the chief austere, aloud began
The wretch, unfriendly to the race of man:

'Here, vagrant, still! offensive to my lords!
Blows have more energy than airy words.
These arguments I'll use:—nor conscious shame,
Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
A plenteous board! Hence! seek another host!'

Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd ;
But shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.

From Cephallenia, cross the surgy main,
Philatius late arriv'd, a faithful swain.
A steer, ungrateful to the bull's embrace,
And goats he brought, the pride of all their race !
Imported in a shallop not his own :
The dome re-echoed to their mingled moan.
Straight to the guardian of the bristly kind
He thus began, benevolent of mind :

‘ What guest is he, of such majestic air ?
His lineage and paternal clime declare :
Dim through the' eclipse of fate, the rays divine
Of sovereign state with faded splendour shine.
If monarchs by the gods are plung'd in woe,
To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go !'
Then affable he thus the chief address'd,
Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd :

‘ Stranger ! may fate a milder aspect shew,
And spin thy future with a whiter clue !——
O Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries ;
The tyrant, not the father of the skies !
Unpiteous of the race thy will began !
The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,
With penury, contempt, repulse, and care,
The galling load of life is doom'd to bear.
Ulysses, from his state a wanderer still,
Upbraids thy power, thy wisdom, or thy will :
O monarch ever dear !—O man of woe !—
Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow !
Like thee, poor stranger-guest, denied his home !
Like thee, in rags obscene decreed to roam !
Or haply perish'd on some distant coast,
In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !
Oh, grateful for the good his bounty gave,
I'll grieve, till sorrow sink me to the grave !
His kind protecting hand my youth preferr'd,
The regent of his Cephallenian herd :
With vast increase beneath my care it spreads,
A stately breed ! and blackens far the meads.
Constrain'd, the choicest beeves I thence import,
To cram these cormorants that crowd his court :

Who in partition seek his realm to share ;
Nor human right, nor wrath divine, revere.
Since here resolv'd oppressive these reside,
Contending doubts my anxious heart divide :
Now to some foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
And with the royal herd protection buy—
Then, happier thoughts return the nodding scale ;
Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail :
In opening prospects of ideal joy,
My king returns ; the proud usurpers die,'

To whom the chief: ' In thy capacious mind
Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd,
Attend a deed already ripe in fate :
Attest, O Jove ! the truth I now relate !
'This sacred truth attest each genial power,
Who bless the board, and guard this friendly bower !
Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
'Thy wish produc'd in act, with pleas'd survey,
'Thy wondering eyes shall view : his rightful reign
By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
And to the shades devote the suitor-train.'

' O Jove supreme (the raptur'd swain replies)
With deeds consummate soon the promis'd joys !
These aged nerves, with new-born vigour strung,
In that bless'd cause should emulate the young—'
Assents Eumæus to the prayer address'd ;
And equal ardours fire his loyal breast.

Meantime the suitors urge the prince's fate,
And deathful arts employ the dire debate :
When in his airy tour, the bird of Jove
Truss'd with his sinewy pounce a trembling dove ;
Sinister to their hope ! this omen ey'd
Amphinomus, who thus presaging cried :

' The gods from force and fraud the prince defend.
O peers ! the sanguinary scheme suspend :
Your future thought let sable fate employ ;
And give the present hour to genial joy.'

From council straight the' assenting peerage ceas'd ;
And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast.
Disrob'd, their vests apart in order lay,
Then all with speed succinct the victims slay :

With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,
And the proud steer was on the marble spread.
With fire prepar'd they deal the morsels round;
Wine rosy-bright the brimming goblets crown'd,
By sage Eumæus borne: the purple tide
Melanthius from an ample jar supplied:
High canisters of bread Philæti^{us} plac'd:
And eager all devour the rich repast.
Dispos'd apart, Ulysses shares the treat!
A trivet-table, and ignobler seat,
The prince appoints; but to his sire assigns
The tasteful inwards, and nectareous wines.

‘Partake, my guest, (he cried) without control
The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl.
Dread not the railer’s laugh, nor ruffian’s rage;
No vulgar roof protects thy honour’d age:
This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be;
From my great sire too soon devolv’d to me!
Your violence and scorn, ye suitors, cease;
Lest arms avenge the violated peace.’

Aw’d by the prince; so haughty, brave, and young,
Rage gnaw’d the lip, amazement chain’d the tongue.
‘Be patient, peers! (at length Antinous cries)
The threats of vain imperious youth despise:
Would Jove permit the meditated blow,
That stream of eloquence should cease to flow.’

Without reply vouchsaf’d, Antinous ceas’d:—
Meanwhile the pomp of festival increas’d:
By heralds rank’d, in martial order move
The city-tribes, to pleas’d Apollo’s grove:
Beneath the verdure of which awful shade,
The lunar-hecatomb they grateful laid;
Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.
But the rich banquet in the dome prepar’d,
(An humble side-board set) Ulysses shar’d.
Observant of the prince’s high behest,
His menial train attend the stranger-guest:
Whom Pallas with unpardoning fury fir’d,
By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir’d.
A Samian peer, more studious than the rest
Of vice, who teem’d with many a dead-born jest;

And urg'd, for title to a consort queen,
Unnumber'd acres arable and green;
(Ctesippus nam'd) this lord Ulysses ey'd,
And thus burst out, imposthumate with pride:

‘The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend:
Since due regard must wait the prince’s friend,
Let each a token of esteem bestow:

This gift acquits the dear respect I owe;
With which he nobly may discharge his seat,
And pay the menials for the master’s treat.’

He said; and of the steer before him plac’d,
That sinewy fragment at Ulysses cast,
Where to the pastern-bone, by nerves combin’d,
The well-horn’d foot indissolubly join’d;
Which, whizzing high, the wall unseemly sign’d.
The chief indignant grins a ghastly smile;
Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil;
When thus the prince, with pious rage inflam’d:
‘Had not the’ inglorious wound thy malice aim’d
Fall’n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear:
Nor should thy sire, a queen his daughter boast;
The suitor, now, had vanish’d in a ghost!
No more, ye lewd compeers, with lawless pow’r
Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour:
For genuine worth, of age mature to know,
My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
Or if each other’s wrongs ye still support,
With rapes and riot to profane my court;
What single arm with numbers can contend?
On me let all your lifted swords descend,
And with my life such vile dishonours end.’

A long cessation of discourse ensued;
By gentler Agelaüs thus renew’d:

‘A just reproof, ye peers!—your rage restrain
From the protected guest, and menial train:
And, prince! to stop the source of future ill,
Assent yourself, and gain the royal will.
Whilst hope prevail’d to see your sire restor’d,
Of right the queen refus’d a second lord.
But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate,
To think he still survives to claim the state?’

Now press the sovereign dame with warm desire
To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire:
The lord selected to the nuptial joys,
Far hence will lead the long-contended prize:
Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty bless'd,
You reign of this imperial dome possess'd.'

Sage and serene Telemachus replies:
'By him at whose behests the thunder flies!
And by the name on earth I most revere,
By great Ulysses, and his woes, I swear!
(Who never must review his dear domain;
Inroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train)
Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,
My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse:
But from this dome my parent queen to chase!—
From me, ye gods: avert such dire disgrace.'

But Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom
The suitors' souls, insensate of their doom!
A mirthful frenzy seiz'd the fated crowd;
The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud:
Floating in gore, portentous to survey,
In each discolour'd vase the viands lay!
Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
And sudden sighs precede approaching woe.
In vision wrapp'd, the Hyperesian* seer
Uprose, and thus divin'd the vengeance near:

'O race to death devote! with Stygian shade
Each destin'd peer impending fates invade!
With tears your wan distorted cheeks are drown'd;
With sanguine drops the walls are rubied round!
Thick swarms the spacious hall with howling ghosts,
To people Orcus, and the burning coasts!
Nor gives the sun his golden orb to roll,
But universal night usurps the pole!'

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
The peers reproach the sure divine of fate;
And thus Eurymachus: 'The dotard's mind
To every sense is lost, to reason blind:
Swift from the dome conduct the slave away;
Let him in open air behold the day.'

'Tax not (the heaven-illumin'd seer rejoin'd)
Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind.

* Theoclymenus.

No clouds of error dim the' etherial rays ;
Her equal power each faithful sense obeys ;
Unguided hence my trembling steps I bend,
Far hence, before yon hovering deaths descend ;
Lest, the ripe harvest of revenge begun,
I share the doom ye suitors cannot shun.'

This said, to sage Piræus sped the seer,
His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.
O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
And aim to wound the prince with pointless wit :
Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
' Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice.
Why such profusion of indulgence shown
To this poor, timorous, toil-detesting drone ?
That other feeds on planetary schemes,
And pays his host with hideous noonday dreams.
But, prince ! for once at least believe a friend ;
To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send :
Where, if they yield their freight across the main,
Dear sell the slaves ! demand no greater gain.'

Thus jovial they :—but nought the prince replies :
Full on his sire he roll'd his ardent eyes ;
Impatient straight to flesh his virgin sword,
From the wise chief he waits the deathful word.

Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen
To see the circle sat, of all unseen.
Sated at length they rise, and bid prepare
An eve repast, with equal cost and care :
But vengeful Pallas, with preventing speed,
A feast proportion'd to their crimes decreed ;
A feast of death !—the feasters doom'd to bleed.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXI.

ARGUMENT.

The Bending of Ulysses's Bow.

Penelope, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who shall first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses taking Eumæus and Philatius apart, discovers himself to them; then, returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause to be delivered to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter in the same instant thunders from heaven: Ulysses accepts the omen; and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals' fires,
With her own heart Penelope inspires.
Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
The well aim'd arrow through the distant ring,
Shall end the strife, and win the' imperial dame;
But discord and black death await the game!
The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends;
At distance due a virgin train attends:
A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd:
Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay;
There shone high heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
And there the bow which great Ulysses bore,
And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept
Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since, when Sparta's shores he trod,
On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd:
Beneath Orsilochus's roof they met;
One loss was private, one a public debt:
Messena's state from Ithaca detains
Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd swains;
And to the youthful prince, to urge the laws,
The king and elders trust their common cause.
But Iphitus, employ'd on other cares,
Search'd the wide country for his wandering mares,
And mules, the strongest of the labouring kind;
Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!
For journeying on to Hercules, at length
That lawless wretch, that man of brutal strength,
Deaf to heaven's voice, the social rite transgress'd;
And for the beauteous mares destroy'd his guest:
He gave the bow; and on Ulysses' part
Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart:
Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore
Their first, last pledges! for they met no more.
The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
Ulysses bore not from his native land;
Nor in the front of battle taught to bend;
But kept, in dear memorial of his friend.

Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
By many an easy step the matron went;
Then o'er the pavements glides with grace divine:
(With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)
The folding gates a dazzling light display'd,
With pomp of various architrave o'erlaid.
The bolt, obedient to the silken string,
Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;
The wards respondent to the key turn round;
The bars fall back; the flying valves resound:
Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.
She moves majestic through the wealthy room,
Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume;
There from the column where aloft it hung,
Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung:
Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.

To full satiety of grief she mourns ;
Then silent, to the joyous hall returns,
To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
The' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.

Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
Which held the' alternate brass and silver rings.
Full in the portal the chaste queen appears,
And with her veil conceals the coming tears:
On either side awaits a virgin fair ;
While thus the matron, with majestic air :

' Say you, whom these forbidden walls enclose,
For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows ;
If these neglected, faded charms can move ?
Or is it but a vain pretence, you love ?
If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,
Hear the conditions, and commence the strife:
Who first Ulysses' wondrous bow shall bend,
And through twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,
Him will I follow, and forsake my home ;—
For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,
Long, long the scene of all my past delight,
And still to last, the vision of my night !'

Graceful she said ; and bade Eumæus show
The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.
From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,
Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.
Philætiüs too relents ; but secret shed
The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said :

' Hence to your fields, ye rustics ! hence, away ;
Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day :
Nor to the royal heart recall in vain
The sad remembrance of a perish'd man.
Enough her precious tears already flow—
Or share the feast with due respect, or go
To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow :
No vulgar task ! Ill suits this courtly crew
That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew.
I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er
While yet a child) what majesty he bore !
And still, all infant as I was, retain
The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man.'

He said, but in his soul fond joys arise ;
And his proud hopes already win the prize.
To speed the flying shaft through every ring,
Wretch ! is not thine !—the arrows of the king
Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing !

Then thus Telemachus : ‘ Some god I find
With pleasing frenzy has possess’d my mind ;
When a lov’d mother threatens to depart,
Why with this ill-tim’d gladness leaps my heart ?
Come then, ye suitors ! and dispute a prize
Richer than all the Achaian state supplies ;
Than all proud Argos or Mycæna knows,
Than all our isles or continents enclose :
A woman matchless, and almost divine :
Fit for the praise of every tongue but mine.
No more excuses then, no more delay ;
Haste to the trial—Lo ! I lead the way.
I too may try, and if this arm can wing
The feather’d arrow through the destin’d ring,
Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,
I shall not sorrow for a mother lost ;
But, bless’d in her, possess these arms alone,
Heir of my father’s strength, as well as throne.’

He spoke ; then rising, his broad sword unbound,
And cast his purple garment on the ground.
A trench he open’d ; in a line he plac’d
The level axes, and the points made fast.
(His perfect skill the wondering gazers ey’d,
The game as yet unseen, as yet untried.)
Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand ;
And grasp’d the bow, and twang’d it in his hand.
Three times, with beating heart, he made essay ;
Three times, unequal to the task, gave way :
A modest boldness on his cheek appear’d :
And thrice he hop’d, and thrice again he fear’d :
The fourth had drawn it.—The great sire with joy
Beheld ; but with a sign forbade the boy.
His ardour straight the obedient prince suppress’d,
And, artful, thus the suitor train address’d :

‘ Oh, lay the cause on youth yet immature !
(For heaven forbid, such weakness should endure)

How shall this arm, unequal to the bow,
Retort an insult, or repel a foe?
But you! whom heaven with better nerves has bless'd,
Accept the trial, and the prize contest.'

He cast the bow before him; and apart
Against the polish'd quiver propp'd the dart.
Resuming then his seat, Eupithes' son,
The bold Antinous, to the rest begun:
'From where the goblet first begins to flow,
From right to left, in order take the bow;
And prove your several strengths.'—The princes heard,
And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd:
The eldest born of Oenops' noble race,
Who next the goblet held his holy place.
He, only he, of all the suitor throng,
Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong.
With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains;
The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!
Already in despair he gives it o'er:—
'Take it who will, (he cries) I strive no more.
What numerous deaths attend this fatal bow?
What souls and spirits shall it send below?
Better indeed to die, and fairly give
Nature her debt, than disappointed live;
With each new sun to some new hope a prey,
Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.
How long in vain Penelope we sought?
This bow shall ease us of that idle thought;
And send us with some humbler wife to live,
Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give.'

Thus speaking, on the floor the bow he plac'd
(With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd):
At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws;
And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said:
'What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled?
Thy coward function ever is in fear;
Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.
Why should this bow be fatal to the brave?
Because the priest is born a peaceful slave.
Mark then what others can.'—He ended there;
And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare,

He gives it instant flame : then fast beside
Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.
With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er,
Chafe every knot, and supple every pore,
Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain :
The bow inflexible resists their pain.
The force of great Eurymachus alone
And bold Antinous, yet untried, unknown :
Those only now remain'd ;—but those confess'd
Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.
The king observes them : he the hall forsakes,
And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes.
Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke :
' Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock !
Shall I the secret of my breast conceal ;
Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell ?
Say, should some favouring god restore again
The lost Ulysses to his native reign ?
How beat your hearts ?—what aid would you afford ?
To the proud suitors ; or your ancient lord ?

Philætiüs thus :—' Oh, were thy word not vain !
Would mighty Jove restore that man again !
These aged sinews with new vigour strung,
In his bless'd cause should emulate the young.'
With equal vows Eumæus too implor'd
Each power above, with wishes for his lord.

He saw their secret souls, and thus began :
' Those vows the gods accord—behold the man !
Your own Ulysses ! twice ten years detain'd
By woes and wanderings from his hapless land :
At length he comes ; but comes despis'd, unknown ;
And finding faithful you, and you alone.
All else have cast him from their very thought ;
E'en in their wishes and their prayers forgot !
Hear then, my friends ! If Jove this arm succeed,
And give you impious revellers to bleed,
My care shall be, to bless your future lives
With large possessions, and with faithful wives :
Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend :
And each on young Telemachus attend,
And each be call'd his brother, and my friend,

To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye ;
Lo ! the broad scar indented on my thigh,
When with Autolycus's sons, of yore,
On Parnass' top I chas'd the tusky boar.'
His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd
The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd :
Eager they view'd ; with joy they stood amaz'd ;
With tearful eyes o'er all their master gaz'd :
Around his neck their longing arms they cast ;
His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd :
Tears follow'd tears :—no word was in their power ;
In solemn silence fell the kindly shower.
The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.

Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun,
But first the wise man ceas'd, and thus began :
' Enough—on other cares your thought employ ;
For danger waits on all untimely joy.
Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near :
Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear.
Re-enter then : not all at once ; but stay
Some moments you, and let me lead the way.
To me, neglected as I am, I know
The haughty suitors will deny the bow ;
But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis borne away,
Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.
At every portal let some matron wait ;
And each lock fast the well-compacted gate :
Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear ;
Though arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear.
To thy strict charge, Philæti^{us} ! we consign
The court's main gate : to guard that pass be thine.'

This said, he first return'd : the faithful swains
At distance follow, as their king ordains.
Before the flame Eurymachus now stands,
And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands :
Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began :

' I mourn the common cause : for, oh my friends !
On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends ?
Not the lost nuptials can affect me more
(For Greece has beauteous dames on every shore),

But baffled thus! confess'd so far below
Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow!
How shall all ages our attempt deride!
Our weakness scorn!—Antinous thus replied:

‘Not so, Eurymachus: that no man draws
The wondrous bow, attend another cause.
Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day,
Which thoughtless we in games would waste away:
Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forego,
And here leave fix'd the ringlets in a row.
Now bid the sewer approach; and let us join
In due libations, and in rites divine:
So end our night: before the day shall spring,
The choicest offerings let Melanthius bring:
Let then to Phœbus' name the fatted thighs
Feed the rich smokes high curling to the skies;
So shall the patron of these arts bestow
(For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow.’

They heard, well-pleas'd: the ready heralds bring
The cleansing waters from the limpid spring:
The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
In order circling to the peers around.
That rite complete, up rose the thoughtful man;
And thus his meditated scheme began:

‘If what I ask your noble minds approve,
Ye peers and rivals in the royal love!
Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous' ear
(Whose sage decision I with wonder hear),
And if Eurymachus the motion please;
Give heaven this day, and rest the bow in peace.
To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
And take it he, the favour'd of the skies!
But since till then this trial you delay,
Trust it one moment to my hands to-day;
Fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,
What once I was, whom wretched you despise;
If yet this arm its ancient force retain;
Or if my woes (a long continued train)
And wants and insults make me less than man.’

Rage flash'd in lightning from the suitors' eyes,
Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.
Antinous then:—‘O miserable guest!
Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast?

Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd
To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,
Admitted here with princes to confer;
A man unknown, a needy wanderer?
To copious wine this insolence we owe:
And much thy betters wine can overthrow.
The great Eurytion when this frenzy stung,
Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung;
Boundless the Centaur rag'd; till one and all
The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall;
His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.
Hence with long war the double race was curs'd:
Fatal to all; but to the' aggressor first.
Such fate I prophesy our guest attends,
If here this interdicted bow he bends.
Nor shall these walls such insolence contain:
The first fair wind transports him o'er the main;
Where Echetus to death the guilty brings
(The worst of mortals, e'en the worst of kings).
Better than that, if thou approve our cheer;
Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.'

To this the queen her just dislike express'd:—
' 'Tis impious, prince! to harm the stranger-guest;
Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name:
And some respect Telemachus may claim.
What if the' immortals on the man bestow
Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow?
Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
Accept a wandering stranger for my lord?
A hope so idle never touch'd his brain:
Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
Far be he banish'd from this stately scene,
Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean!

' O fair! and wisest of so fair a kind!
(Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd)
Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
We dread the all-arraigning voice of fame;
We dread the censure of the meanest slave,
The weakest woman:—all can wrong the brave.
" Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
Of that brave chief whose bow they could not bend!

In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
And did what all those princes could not do."
Thus will the common voice our deed defame;
And thus posterity upbraid our name.'

To whom the queen:—' If fame engage your views,
Forbear those acts which infamy pursues:
Wrong and oppression no renown can raise;
Know, friend! that virtue is the path to praise.
The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
Speak him descended from no vulgar race.
To him the bow, as he desires, convey;
And to his hand if Phœbus give the day,
Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear
A two-edg'd falchion, and a shining spear,
Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
And safe conveyance to his port of rest.'

' O royal mother! ever-honour'd name!
Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim
A son's just right.—No Grecian prince but I
Has power this bow to grant, or to deny.
Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain,
To me alone my father's arms descend;
And mine alone they are, to give or lend.
Retire, O queen! thy household task resume,
Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom;
The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
These cares to man belong,—and most to me.'

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
His sage reply, and with her train retir'd:
There in her chamber as she sat apart,
Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul:
Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Now through the press the bow Eumæus bore,
And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar.
' Hold, lawless rustic! whither wilt thou go?
To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow?
Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
Far from the sweet society of men,

To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made ;
If heaven and Phœbus lend the suitors aid.'

Thus they.—Aghast he laid the weapon down,
But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on :
' Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words ;
What ! hopes the fool to please so many lords ?
Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand,
Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.
Oh ! could the vigour of this arm as well
The' oppressive suitors from my walls expel !
Then what a shoal of lawless men should go
To fill with tumult the dark courts below !'

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
The youth, indulging in the genial day.
Eumæus, thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
The strife-full bow, and give it to the king.
Old Euryclea calling then aside,
' Hear what Telemachus enjoins (he cried :)
At every portal let some matron wait,
And each lock fast the well-compacted gate ;
And if unusual sounds invade their ear,
If arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,
Let none to call or issue forth presume,
But close attend the labours of the loom.'

Her prompt obedience on his order waits ;
Clos'd in an instant were the palace-gates.
In the same moment forth Philæti^{us} flies,
Secures the court, and with a cable ties
The utmost gate (the cable strongly wrought
Of Byblos' reed, a ship from Egypt brought ;)
Then, unperceiv'd and silent, at the board
His seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the master bore,
Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er ;
Lest time or worms had done the weapon wrong,
Its owner absent, and untried so long.
While some deriding—' How he turns the bow !
Some other like it sure the man must know,
Or else would copy ; or in bows he deals :
Perhaps he makes them ; or perhaps he steals.'
' Heaven to this wretch (another cried) be kind !
And bless, in all to which he stands inclin'd,
With such good fortune as he now shall find.'

Heedless he heard them:—but disdain'd reply ;
The bow perusing with exactest eye.
Then, as some heavenly minstrel, taught to sing
High notes, responsive to the trembling string,
To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,
Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,
Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro :
So the great master drew the mighty bow ;
And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.
From his essaying hand the string let fly
Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.
A general horror ran through all the race ;
Sunk was each heart, and pale was every face.
Signs from above ensued :—the' unfolding sky
In lightning burst ; Jove thunder'd from on high.
Fir'd at the call of heaven's almighty lord,
He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board
(Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,
But soon to fly, the messengers of death.)

Now sitting as he was, the cord he drew,
Through every ringlet levelling his view ;
Then notch'd the shaft, releas'd, and gave it wing ;
The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string,
Sung on direct, and threaded every ring.
The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds ;
Pierc'd through and through, the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince :—‘ Nor have I wrought thee shame ;
Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim ;
Nor prov'd the toil too hard ; nor have I lost
That ancient vigour, once my pride and boast.
Ill I deserve these haughty peers' disdain :—
Now let them comfort their dejected train :
In sweet repast the present hour employ,
Nor wait till evening for the genial joy :
Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night ;—
Music, the banquet's most refin'd delight.’

He said, then gave a nod ;—and at the word
Telemachus girds on his shining sword.
Fast by his father's side he takes his stand ;
The beamy javelin lightens in his hand.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXII.

ARGUMENT.

The Death of the Suitors.

Ulysses begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus, and Philætius. Melanthius does the same for the wooers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Phemius are spared. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

THEN fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode;
Stripp'd of his rags, he blaz'd out like a god.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store;
Before his feet the rattling shower he threw,
And thus terrific, to the suitor-crew:

‘ One venturous game this hand has won to-day;
Another, princes! yet remains to play:
Another mark our arrow must attain.
Phœbus, assist! nor be the labour vain.’

Swift as the word the parting arrow sings;
And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings.
Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!
High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl;
E'en then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath;
Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death!
For fate who fear'd amidst a feastful band?
And fate to numbers, by a single hand?

Full through his throat Ulysses' weapon pass'd,
And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his last.
The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows,
A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose;
Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls:
Before him spurn'd, the loaded table falls,
And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood
Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall:
O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye:
Each look'd for arms: in vain; no arms were nigh:
'Aim'st thou at princes? (all amaz'd they said)
Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd;
'Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed,
And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed.
Vultures shall tear thee.'—Thus incens'd they spoke;
While each to chance ascrib'd the wondrous stroke:
Blind as they were; for Death e'en now invades
His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
Then grimly frowning with a dreadful look,
That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke.

'Dogs, ye have had your day:—ye fear'd no more
Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore;
While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids, lay:
Not so content, with bolder frenzy fir'd,
E'en to our bed, presumptuous, you aspir'd:
Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
Or shame of men, or dread of gods above:
Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
Or fame's eternal voice in future days:
The hour of vengeance, wretches! now is come;
Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.'

Thus dreadful he. Confus'd the suitors stood;
From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood:
Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide;
Alone the bold Eurymachus replied:

'If, as thy words import (he thus began),
Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,
Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sustain'd
In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land.

The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
Lo! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.
Not love, but wild ambition, was his guide:
To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,
These were his aims;—but juster Jove denied.
Since cold in death the' offender lies, O spare
Thy suppliant people, and receive their pray'r!
Brass, gold, and treasures, shall the spoil defray:
Two hundred oxen every prince shall pay;
The waste of years refunded in a day.

'Till then thy wrath is just.'——Ulysses burn'd
With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd:

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call:
'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all.
Your blood is my demand! your lives the prize,
Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.
Hence with those coward terms: or fight, or fly;
The choice is left ye, to resist or die:
And die I trust ye shall.'——He sternly spoke:
With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.

Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train:
'Yon archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain;
But from the threshold shall his darts be sped,
(Whoe'er he be) till every prince lie dead.
Be mindful of yourselves; draw forth your swords,
And to his shafts obtend these ample boards
(So need compels.) Then, all united, strive
The bold invader from his post to drive:
The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste,
And this mad archer soon have shot his last.'

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor sword,
And like a lion rush'd against his lord.
The wary chief the rushing foe repress'd;
Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast:
His falling hand deserts the lifted sword,
And prone he falls extended o'er the board!
Before him wide, in mix'd effusion roll
The' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl.
Full through his liver pass'd the mortal wound;
With dying rage his forehead beats the ground:

He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.

Next bold Amphinomus his arms extends,
To force the pass: the godlike man defends.
Thy spear, Telemachus! prevents the' attack:
The brazen weapon driving through his back,
Thence through his breast its bloody passage tore;
Flat falls he thundering on the marble floor,
And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore.
He left his javelin in the dead, for fear
The long encumbrance of the weighty spear
To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
To rush between and use the shorten'd sword.
With speedy ardour to his sire he flies;
And, 'Arm, great father! arm (in haste he cries;)
Lo hence I run for other arms to wield,
For missile javelins, and for helm and shield:
Fast by our side let either faithful swain
In arms attend us, and their part sustain.'

'Haste and return (Ulysses made reply),
While yet the' auxiliar shafts this hand supply;
Lest thus alone, encounter'd by an host,
Driven from the gate, the' important pass be lost.'

With speed Telemachus obeys; and flies
Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies.
Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
And four broad bucklers, to his sire he bears:
At once in brazen panoply they shone;
At once each servant brac'd his armour on:
Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand,
Chief after chief expir'd at every wound,
And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground.
Soon as his store of flying fates was spent,
Against the wall he set the bow unbent:
And now his shoulders bear the massy shield;
And now his hands two beamy javelins wield:
He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd
O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade.

There stood a window near, whence looking down
From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.

A double strength of valves secur'd the place;
A high and narrow, but the only pass:
The cautious king, with all-preventing care,
To guard that outlet, plac'd Eumæus there:
When Agelaüs thus:—'Has none the sense
To mount yon window, and alarm from thence
The neighbour town? the town shall force the door,
And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more.'

Melanthius then:—'That outlet to the gate
So near adjoins, that one may guard the strait.
But other methods of defence remain;
Myself with arms can furnish all the train;
Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.'

He said; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears:
All arm, and sudden round the hall appears
A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty woe:
On every side he sees the labour grow:—
'Oh curs'd event! and oh unlook'd-for aid!
Melanthius or the women have betray'd—
Oh my dear son!'—The father, with a sigh,
Then ceas'd;—the filial virtue made reply:

'Falsehood is folly; and 'tis just to own
The fault committed:—this was mine alone;
My haste neglected yonder door to bar;
And hence the villain has supplied their war.
Run, good Eumæus, then; and (what before
I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door:
Learn if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son.'

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain:
Not unobserv'd;—Eumæus watchful ey'd;
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side:

'The miscreant we suspected takes that way,
Him, if this arm be powerful, shall I slay?
Or drive him hither, to receive the meed
From thy own hand, of this detested deed?'

'Not so (replied Ulysses:) leave him there.
For us sufficient is another care:

Within the structure of this palace wall
To keep enclos'd his masters till they fall.
Go you and seize the felon : backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind ;
On this, his body by strong cords extend,
And on a column near the roof suspend ;
So studied tortures his vile days shall end.'

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste :
Behind the felon unperceiv'd they pass'd,
As round the room in quest of arms he goes
(The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes :)
One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,
Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapp'd and worn,
The brass corroded, and the leather torn.
Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stepp'd,
Fierce on the villain from each side they leap'd,
Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
And down reluctant on the pavement threw.
Active and pleas'd, the zealous swains fulfil
At every point the master's rigid will :
First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound ;
Then straiten'd cords involv'd his body round :
So drawn aloft, athwart the column tied,
The howling felon swung from side to side.

Euæus scoffing then with keen disdain :
' There pass thy pleasing night, O gentle swain !
On that soft pillow, from that envied height
First may'st thou see the springing dawn of light ;
So timely rise, when morning streaks the east,
To drive thy victims to the suitors' feast.'

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay ;
Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away :
Each, breathing death, resum'd his dangerous post
Near great Ulysses ; four against an host.
When lo ! descending to her hero's aid,
Jove's daughter, Pallas, war's triumphant maid :
In Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side ;
Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cried :

' Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend ;
Oh every sacred name in one !—my friend !

Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown :
Whate'er through life's whole series I have done
Or good, or grateful, now to mind recall,
And aiding this one hour, repay it all.'

Thus he:—but pleasing hopes his bosom warm
Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.

The adverse host the phantom warrior ey'd ;
And first, loud threatening, Agelaüs cried :

' Mentor, beware ; nor let that tongue persuade
Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid :
Our force successful shall our threat make good,
And with the sire's and son's commix thy blood.
What hop'st thou here ?—Thee first the sword shall slay ;
Then lop thy whole posterity away :
Far hence thy banish'd consort shall we send ;
With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend :
Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend.'

His barbarous insult e'en the goddess fires ;
Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires :

' Art thou Ulysses ? where then shall we find
The patient body and the constant mind ?
That courage, once the Trojan's daily dread,
Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead ?
And where that conduct, which reveng'd the lust
Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust ?
If this, when Helen was the cause, were done,
What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son !
Rise then in combat ; at my side attend ;
Observe what vigour gratitude can lend,
And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend !'

She spoke ; but willing longer to survey
The sire and son's great acts, withheld the day ;
By further toils decreed the brave to try,
And level pois'd the wings of victory :
Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
And unperceiv'd enjoys the rising fight.

Damastor's son, bold Agelaüs, leads
The guilty war : Eurynomus succeeds :
With these, Pisander, great Polyctor's son,
Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,

With Demoptolemus: these six survive;
The best of all the shafts had left alive.
Amidst the carnage desperate as they stand,
Thus Agelaüs rous'd the lagging band:

'The hour is come, when yon fierce man no more
With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor:
Lo! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast:
The four remain;—but four against an host.
Let each at once discharge the deadly dart:
One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart:
Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain:
The rest must perish, their great leader slain.'

Then all at once their mingled lances threw!
And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew:
In vain! Minerva turn'd them with her breath,
And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death;
With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,
One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls;
The storm pass'd innocent.—The godlike man
Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began:

'Tis now (brave friends) our turn, at once to throw
(So speed them heaven) our javelins at the foe.
That impious race to all their past misdeeds
Would add our blood:—Injustice still proceeds.'

He spoke: at once their fiery lances flew:
Great Demoptolemus, Ulysses slew;
Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart;
The goatherd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart;
Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumæus, falls:
Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.
The rest retreat: the victors now advance;
Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.
Again the foe discharge the steely shower;
Again made frustrate by the virgin-power:
Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall,
Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall:
Some weak, or ponderous with the brazen head,
Drop harmless, on the pavement sounding dead.

Then bold Amphimedon his javelin cast;
Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly raz'd:
And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd
On good Eumæus' shield and shoulder glanc'd:

Not lessen'd of their force (so slight the wound)
Each sung along, and dropp'd upon the ground.
Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamus, to bear
Thy death, ennobled by Ulysses' spear.
By the bold son Amphimedon was slain;
And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain.
Pierc'd through the breast the rude Ctesippus bled,
And thus Philæti^{us} gloried o'er the dead:

‘ There end thy pompous vaunts and high disdain,
O sharp in scandal, voluble and vain!
How weak is mortal pride! To heaven alone
The' event of actions and our fates are known;
Scoffer, behold what gratitude we bear:
The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.’

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
And Damastorides that instant fell:
Fast by, Leocritus expiring lay,
The prince's javelin tore its bloody way
Through all his bowels: down he tumbles prone,
His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confess'd:—aloft she spreads
The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads;
The dreadful ægis blazes in their eye;
Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and they fly:
Confus'd, distracted, through the rooms they fling,
Like oxen madden'd by the breese's sting,
When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle spring.
Not half so keen, fierce vultures of the chase
Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race.
When the wide field extended snares beset,
With conscious dread they shun the quivering net:
No help, no flight; but wounded every way,
Headlong they drop; the fowlers seize the prey.
On all sides thus they double wound on wound;
In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground:
Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan,
And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Leiodes first before the victor falls;
The wretched augur thus for mercy calls:
‘ O, gracious, hear:—nor let thy suppliant bleed;
Still undishonour'd, or by word or deed,

Thy house, for me, remains; by me repress'd,
Full oft was check'd the' injustice of the rest:
Averse they heard me when I counsell'd well;
Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.
O spare an augur's consecrated head,
Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead.'

' Priest as thou art! for that detested band
Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land!
Against Ulysses have thy vows been made:
For them, thy daily orisons were paid:
Yet more, e'en to our bed thy pride aspires:—
One common crime one common fate requires.'

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took
Which Agelaüs' dying hand forsook;
Full through his neck the weighty falchion sped:
Along the pavement roll'd the muttering head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd;
Phemius, the sweet, the heaven-instructed bard.
Beside the gate the reverend minstrel stands;
The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands:
Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,
Where oft Laertes holy vows had paid,
And oft Ulysses smoking victims laid.
His honour'd harp with care he first set down,
Between the laver and the silver throne;
Then prostrate, stretch'd before the dreadful man,
Persuasive thus, with accent soft began:

' O king! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind.
A deed like this thy future fate would wrong:
For dear to gods and men is sacred song.
Self-taught I sing;—by heaven, and heaven alone,
The genuine seeds of poesy are sown;
And (what the gods bestow) the lofty lay,
To gods alone, and godlike worth, we pay.
Save then the poet, and thyself reward;
'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.
That here I sung, was force and not desire;
This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire:
And let thy son attest, nor sordid pay,
Nor servile flattery, stain'd the moral lay.'

The moving words Telemachus attends,
His sire approaches, and the bard defends:—
'O mix not, father, with those impious dead
The man divine; forbear that sacred head.
Medon, the herald, too our arms may spare;
Medon, who made my infancy his care:
If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live.'

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
Wrapp'd in a new slain ox's ample hide:
Swift at the word he cast his screen aside,
Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears,
And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears:

'O prince! O friend! lo here thy Medon stands;
Ah, stop the hero's unresisted hands,
Incens'd too justly by that impious brood
Whose guilty glories now are set in blood.'

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye:
'Be bold; on friendship and my son rely;
Live, an example for the world to read,
How much more safe the good than evil deed.
Thou, with the heaven-taught bard, in peace resort
From blood and carnage to yon open court:
Me other work requires.'—With timorous awe
From the dire scene the' exempted two withdraw;
Scarce sure of life, look round,—and trembling move
To the bright altars of protector Jove.

Meanwhile Ulysses search'd the dome, to find
If yet there live of all the' offending kind.
Not one!—complete the bloody tale he found;
All steep'd in blood, all gasping on the ground.
So, when by hollow shores the fisher train
Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,
And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught contain,
All naked of their element, and bare,
The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air;
Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiffening prey,
Till the warm sun exhales their soul away.

And now the king commands his son to call
Old Euryclea to the deathful hall:

The son, observant, not a moment stays;
The aged governess with speed obeys:
The sounding portals instant they display;
The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood.
So the grim lion from the slaughter comes:
Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams;
His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed complete,
A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd:
The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said:
 'Woman, experienc'd as thou art, control
Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
To' insult the dead is cruel and unjust;
Fate, and their crime have sunk them to the dust.
Nor heeded these the censure of mankind;
The good and bad were equal in their mind.
Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
And each now wails, an unlamented shade.
But thou sincere, oh Euryclea! say,
What maids dishonour us, and what obey?'

Then she:—'In these thy kingly walls remain
(My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
Taught by my care to cull the fleece, or weave,
And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive:
Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
Nor me, nor chaste Penelope, obey:
Nor fits it that Telemachus command
(Young as he is) his mother's female band.
Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye;
There wake her with the news—the matron cried.
'Not so (Ulysses more sedate replied),
Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty deeds.—'
In haste the matron parts: the king proceeds:
'Now to dispose the dead the care remains
To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains:
The' offending females to that task we doom,
To wash, to scent, and purify the room.

These (every table cleans'd, and every throne,
And all the melancholy labour done)
Drive to yon court, without the palace-wall:
There the revenging sword shall smite them all;
So with the suitors let them mix with dust,
Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.'

He said:—the lamentable train appear:
Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear;
Each heav'd her mournful burden, and beneath
The porch depos'd the ghastly heaps of death.
The chief severe, compelling each to move,
Urg'd the dire task, imperious, from above.
With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er;
(The swains unite their toil) the walls, the floor,
Wash'd with the' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore.
Once more the palace set in fair array,
To the base court the females take their way;
There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
(Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their fall.

Then thus the prince:—'To these shall we afford
A fate so pure as by the martial sword?
To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
And base revilers of our house and name?'

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
A ship's tough cable, from a column hung;
Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
Whence no contending foot could reach the ground.
Their heads above connected in a row,
They beat the air with quivering feet below:
Thus on some tree, hung struggling in the snare,
The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.
Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
The empty corpse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
Their bloody work: they lopp'd away the man,
Morsel for dogs! then trimm'd with brazen sheers
The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears;
His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel:
He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell.

They wash, and to Ulysses take their way;
So ends the bloody business of the day.

To Euryclea then address'd the king :
' Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
To purge the palace : then the queen attend,
And let her with a matron-train descend ;
The matron-train with all the virgin band
Assemble here, to learn their lord's command.'

Then Euryclea :—' Joyful I obey ;
But cast those mean dishonest rags away :
Permit me first thy royal robes to bring :
Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king,'

' Bring sulphur straight and fire' (the monarch cries).
She hears, and at the word obedient flies.
With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,
He purg'd the walls and blood-polluted rooms.
Again the matron springs with eager pace,
And spreads her lord's return from place to place.
They hear, rush forth and instant round him stand ;
A gazing throng, a torch in every hand.
They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace
Each humbly kiss'd his knee, or hand, or face :
He knows them all ; in all such truth appears,
E'en he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIH.

ARGUMENT.

Euryclea awakens Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her, but supposes some god has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstance she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has passed during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,
The nurse with eager rapture speeds her way:
The transports of her faithful heart supply
A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.

‘And sleeps my child? the reverend matron cries:
Ulysses lives! arise, my child arise!
At length appears the long-expected hour!
Ulysses comes! the suitors are no more!
No more they view the golden light of day;
Arise, and bless thee with the glad survey!’

Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen rejoin'd:
‘Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind?
The righteous powers, who tread the starry skies,
The weak enlighten, and confound the wise,
And human thought with unresisted sway,
Depress or raise, enlarge or take away:
Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
And folly with the tongue of wisdom speaks.

Unkind, the fond illusion to impose!
Was it to flatter, or deride, my woes?
Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,
Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy:
Why must I wake to grieve; and curse thy shore,
O Troy! may never tongue pronounce thee more!
Begone: another might have felt our rage:
But age is sacred: and we spare thy age.'

To whom with warmth: 'My soul a lie disdains:
Ulysses lives: thy own Ulysses reigns:
That stranger, patient of the suitors' wrongs,
And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues,
He, he is thine! thy son, his latent guest
Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast;
With well-concerted art to end his woes,
And burst at once in vengeance on the foes.'

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung
Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung;
Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear—

'Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here?
How could that numerous and outrageous band
By one be slain, though by an hero's hand?'

'I saw it not, (she cries) but heard alone,
When death was busy, a loud dying groan:
The damsel-train turn'd pale at every wound;
Immur'd we sat, and catch'd each passing sound.
When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends,
And at his nod the damsel-train descends;
There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,
And the dead suitors almost swam in blood.
Thy heart had leap'd the hero to survey,
Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey,
Glorious in gore!—now with sulphureous fires
The dome he purges, now the flame aspires;
Heap'd lie the dead without the palace-walls:
Haste, daughter, haste, thy own Ulysses calls!
Thy every wish the bounteous gods bestow;
Enjoy the present good, and former woe:
Ulysses lives his vanquish'd foes to see:
He lives, to thy Telemachus and thee!'

'Ah no! (with sighs Penelope rejoin'd)
Excess of joy disturbs thy wandering mind.

How bless'd this happy hour, should he appear!
Dear to us all,—to me supremely dear!
Ah no! some god the suitors' deaths decreed:
Some god descends, and by his hand they bleed.
Blind! to condemn the stranger's righteous cause,
And violate all hospitable laws!
The good they hated, and the powers defied:
But heaven is just; and by a god they died.
For never must Ulysses view this shore;
Never!—the lov'd Ulysses is no more;

‘What words (the matron cries) have reach'd my ears?
Doubt we his presence, when he now appears?
Then hear conviction:—Ere the fatal day
That forc'd Ulysses o'er the watery way,
A boar, fierce-rushing in the silvan war,
Plough'd half his thigh: I saw, I saw the scar,
And, wild with transport, had reveal'd the wound;
But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
Then, daughter, haste away! and if a lie
Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die!’

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies:
‘Wise is thy soul; but errors seize the wise.
The works of gods what mortal can survey;
Who knows their motives, who shall trace their way?
But learn we instant how the suitors trod
The paths of death; by man, or by a god?’

Thus speaks the queen; and no reply attends,
But with alternate joy and fear descends;
At every step debates, her lord to prove!
Or, rushing to his arms, confess her love!
Then gliding through the marble valves in state,
Oppos'd, before the shining fire she sat.
The monarch, by a column high entron'd,
His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;
Curious to hear his queen the silence break:
Amaz'd she sat, and impotent to speak:
O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.
At length Telemachus:—‘Oh who can find
A woman like Penelope unkind?
Why thus in silence? why with winning charms
Thus slow, to fly with rapture to his arms?’

Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
When twice ten years are pass'd of mighty woes;
To softness lost, to spousal love unknown,
The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone!

'O my Telemachus! (the queen rejoin'd)
Distracting fears confound my labouring mind;
Powerless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
Nor dare to question: doubts on doubts arise.
O deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove!

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies:
'Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wise;
Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring:
This garb of poverty belies the king:
No more.—This day our deepest care requires,
Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
If one man's blood, though mean, distain our hands,
The homicide retreats to foreign lands:
By us, in heaps the' illustrious peerage falls;
The' important deed our whole attention calls.'

'Be that thy care, (Telemachus replies)
The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise;
For wisdom all is thine!—lo, I obey,
And dauntless follow where you lead the way;
Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
Thy coward son degenerate lag behind.'

'Then instant to the bath (the monarch cries);
Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise,
Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay;
While the sweet lyrist airs of rapture sings,
And forms the dance responsive to the strings:
That hence the' eluded passengers may say,
"Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!"
The suitors' death unknown, till we remove
Far from the court an act inspir'd by Jove.'

Thus spoke the king: the' observant train obey:
At once they bathe, and dress in proud array:
The lyrist strikes the string; gay youths advance,
And fair-zon'd damsels form the sprightly dance.
The voice, attun'd to instrumental sounds,
Ascends the roof; the vaulted roof rebounds;

Not unobserv'd: the Greeks eluded say,
'Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
Inconstant! to admit the bridal hour.'

Thus they—but, nobly chaste, she weds no more.

Meanwhile the wearied king the bath ascends;
With faithful cares Eurynomè attends,
O'er every limb a shower of fragrance sheds:
Then dress'd in pomp, magnificent he treads.
The warrior-goddess gives his frame to shine
With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly
His thick large locks, of hyacinthine dye.
As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
His heavenly skill, a breathing image lives;
By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mould,
And the pale silver glows with fusil gold:
So Pallas his heroic form improves
With bloom divine, and like a god he moves;
More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
Radiant before his gazing consort sat.

'And oh my queen! (he cries) what power above
Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love!
Canst thou, Penelope, when heaven restores
Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
Canst thou, oh cruel! unconcern'd survey
Thy lost Ulysses, on this signal day?
Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
For me, and me alone, the imperial bed:
My weary nature craves the balm of rest:
But heaven with adamant has arm'd her breast.'

'Ah no! (she cries) a tender heart I bear;
A foe to pride; no adamant is there:
And now, e'en now it melts! for sure I see
Once more Ulysses my belov'd in thee!
Fix'd in my soul as when he sail'd to Troy,
His image dwells: then haste the bed of joy!
Haste, from the bridal bower the bed translate,
Fram'd by his hand, and be it dress'd in state!'

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious, with disguise;
Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies:
'Alas for this! what mortal strength can move
The' enormous burden,—who but heaven above?

It mocks the weak attempts of human hands;
But the whole earth must move, if heaven commands.
Then hear sure evidence, while we display
Words seal'd with sacred truth; and truth obey:
This hand the wonder fram'd: an olive spread
Full in the court its ever-verdant head;
Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high
The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky;
Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bower,
And roof'd defensive of the storm and shower;
The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins;
And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.
I lopp'd the branchy head; aloft in twain
Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain:
Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise;
And bore it, regular, from space to space:
Athwart the frame, at equal distance lie
Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye;
Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mould
With silver shone, with elephant and gold.
But if o'erturn'd by rude ungovern'd hands,
Or still inviolate the olive stands,
'Tis thine, O queen, to say:—and now impart,
If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart?"

While yet he speaks, her powers of life decay,
She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away:
At length recovering, to his arms she flew,
And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew:
The tears pour'd down amain:—and, 'Oh, she cries,
Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise!
O vers'd in every turn of human art!
Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart!
The righteous powers, that mortal lots dispose,
Decree us to sustain a length of woes;
And from the flower of life, the bliss deny
To bloom together, fade away, and die.
O let me, let me not thine anger move,
That I forbore, thus, thus, to speak my love;
Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms,
Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms!
I dreaded fraud! Men, faithless men, betray
Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey:

Against the fondness of my heart I strove ;
'Twas caution, oh my lord ! not want of love :
Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms,
Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms,
Ere Greece rose dreadful in the' avenging day,
Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.
But heaven, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed
That she should wander, and that Greece should bleed :
Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
She colour'd all our wretched lives with woe.
But why these sorrows when my lord arrives ?
I yield, I yield ! my own Ulysses lives !
The secrets of the bridal bed are known
To thee, to me, to Actoris alone
(My father's present in the spousal hour,
The sole attendant on our genial bow'r.)
Since what no eye has seen thy tongue reveal'd,
Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield.'

Touch'd to the soul, the king with rapture hears,
Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.
As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores
Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars ;
Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
And gulf'd in crowds at once the sailors die ;
If one, more happy, while the tempest raves,
Out-lives the tumult of conflicting waves,
All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand,
And plunging forth with transport grasps the land :
The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.
Nor had they ended till the morning ray :
But Pallas backward held the rising day,
The wheels of night retarding, to detain
The gay Aurora in the wavy main,
Whose flaming steeds, emerging through the night,
Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies :
' Yet fate, yet cruel fate, repose denies.
A labour long, and hard, remains behind ;
By heaven above, by hell beneath enjoin'd :
For, to Tiresias through the' eternal gates
Of hell I trod, to learn my future fates.

But end we here—the night demands repose ;
Be deck'd the couch ! and peace awhile, my woes !'

To whom the queen: 'Thy word we shall obey,
And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away,
Since the just gods, who tread the starry plains,
Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.
But what those perils heaven decrees, impart ;
Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.'

To this the king: 'Ah why must I disclose
A dreadful story of approaching woes?
Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
When thou must learn, what I must speak, with tears?
Heaven, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees,
Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas ;
From realm to realm a nation to explore
Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,
A painted wonder, flying on the main:
An oar my hand must bear ; a shepherd eyes
The unknown instrument with strange surprise,
And calls a corn-van: this upon the plain
I fix, and hail the monarch of the main ;
Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar:
Thence swift resailing to my native shores,
Due victims slay to all the' etherial powers.
Then heaven decrees in peace to end my days,
And steal myself from life by slow decays:
Unknown to pain in age resign my breath,
When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death ;
To the dark grave retiring as to rest ;
My people blessing, by my people bless'd.

'Such future scenes the' all-righteous powers display,
By their dread seer, and such my future day.'

To whom thus firm of soul:—'If ripe for death,
And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath,
While heaven a kind release from ills foreshows ;
Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !'

But Euryclea with dispatchful care,
And sage Eurynomè, the couch prepare:
Instant they bid the blazing torch display
Around the dome an artificial day ;
Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
And to the queen Eurynomè descends ;

A torch she bears to light with guiding fires
The royal pair ; she guides them, and retires.
Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
To the chaste love-rights of the nuptial bed.

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair :
But in discourse the king and consort lay,
While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away.
Intent he hears Penelope disclose
A mournful story of domestic woes :
His servants' insults ; his invaded bed ;
How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled ;
His generous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
And the wild riots of the suitor-train.
The king alternate a dire tale relates,
Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates :
All he unfolds : his listening spouse turns pale
With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale ;
Sleepless devours each word : and hears, how slain
Cicons on Cicons swell the' ensanguin'd plain ;
How to the land of Lote unblest'd he sails ;
(And images the rills, and flowery vales !)
How dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
(Not unreveng'd) and quaff'd the spouting gore ;
How, the loud storms in prison bound, he sails
From friendly Æolus with prosperous gales ;
Yet fate withstands ! a sudden tempest roars,
And whirls him groaning from his native shores :
How on the barbarous Lestrigonian coast,
By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost ;
How scarce himself surviv'd : he paints the bower,
The spells of Circe, and her magic power ;
His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
To seek Tiresias in the vales of death ;
How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade ;
And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts ;
Then how unarm'd he pass'd the Siren-coasts,
The justling rocks where fierce Charybdis raves,
And howling Scylla whirls her thunderous waves,
The cave of death ! How his companions slay
The oxen sacred to the god of day,
Till Jove in wrath the rattling tempest guides,
And whelms the' offenders in the roaring tides :

How struggling through the surge, he reach'd the shores
Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bow'rs,
Where the gay-blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;
And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
Immortal life exempt from age and woe :
How sav'd from storms Phæacia's coast he trod,
By great Alcinous honour'd as a god,
Who gave him last his country to behold,
With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.

He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares.

Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
Minerva rushes through the' aërial way,
And bids Aurora with her golden wheels
Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills :
Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed,
And thus, with thought mature, the monarch said :

' My queen ! my consort ! through a length of years,
We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears :
Thou, for thy lord ; while me the' immortal pow'rs
Detain'd reluctant from my native shores.
Now, bless'd again by heaven, the queen display,
And rule our palace with an equal sway ;
Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
To throng my empty folds with gifts or spoils.
But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes
With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies :
The good old man, to wasting woes a prey,
Weeps a sad life in solitude away.
But hear, though wise ! This morning shall unfold
The deathful scene, on heroes, heroes roll'd ;
Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
From all the scene of tumult far away !'

He spoke, and, sheath'd in arms, incessant flies
To wake his son ; and bid his friends arise.
' To arms !' aloud he cries : his friends obey,
With glittering arms their manly limbs array,
And pass the city gate ; Ulysses leads the way.

Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

The souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge; and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses; who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: and the goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects; which concludes the Odyssey.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign
Conveys the dead, a lamentable train!
The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,
That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day,
Points out the long uncomfortable way.
Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin hollow screams, along the deep descent.
As in the cavern of some rifted den,
Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene,
Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,
They move, and murmurs run through all the rock:
So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts;
And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.
And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends;
And now the gates where evening Sol descends,
And Leucas' rock, and ocean's utmost streams;
And now pervade the dusky land of dreams,

And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
In ever-flowering meads of asphodel.
The empty forms of men inhabit there ;
Impassive semblance, images of air !
Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before ;
Ajax, and great Achilles, are no more !
Yet still, a master-ghost, the rest he aw'd ;
The rest ador'd him, towering as he trod :
Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd ;
And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

New as they were to that infernal shore,
The suitors stopp'd, and gaz'd the hero o'er :
When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
Of great Atrides : him in pomp pursued
And solemn sadness, through the gloom of hell,
The train of those who by Egisthus fell.

' O mighty chief ! (Pelides thus began)
Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man !
King of a hundred kings ! to whom resign'd
The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind ;
Com'st thou the first, to view this dreary state ?
And was the noblest the first mark of fate ?
Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon ;
The lot, which all lament, and none can shun !
Oh ! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round !
Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
Historic marbles to record thy praise :
Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone
Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son.
But heavier fates were destin'd to attend !
What man is happy, till he knows his end ?

' O son of Peleus ! greater than mankind !
(Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd)
Thrice happy thou ! to press the martial plain
Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain :
In clouds of smoke, rais'd by the noble fray,
Great and terrific e'en in death you lay,
And deluges of blood flow'd round you every way.
Nor ceas'd the strife, till Jove himself oppos'd,
And all in tempests the dire evening clos'd.

Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load,
And decent on the funeral bed bestow'd.
Then unguents sweet and tepid streams we shed;
Tears flow'd from every eye, and o'er the dead
Each clipp'd the curling honours of his head.
Struck at the news, thy azure mother came;
The sea-green sisters waited on the dame:
A voice of loud lament through all the main
Was heard, and terror seiz'd the Grecian train:
Back to their ships the frightened host had fled,
But Nestor spoke;—they listen'd, and obey'd.
(From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
And long vicissitudes of human things.)
“Forbear your flight: fair Thetis from the main,
To mourn Achilles, leads her azure train.”
Around thee stand the daughters of the deep,
Robe thee in heavenly vests, and round thee weep;
Round thee, the Muses, with alternate strain,
In ever-consecrating verse complain.
Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,
And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears.
Till seventeen nights and seventeen days return'd,
All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.
To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day;
And fatted sheep, and sable oxen, slay;
With oils and honey blaze the' augmented fires,
And like a god adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.
Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pile
Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil;
Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
And the mix'd clamour thunders in the skies.
Soon as absorpt in all-embracing flame
Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,
We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
With wines and unguents in a golden vase;
(The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old,
And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold)
There we thy reliques, great Achilles, blend
With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend:
In the same urn a separate space contains
Thy next lov'd, Antilochus' remains.

Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround
Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound:
High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
That wide the' extended Hellespont surveys;
Where all, from age to age who pass the coast,
May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.
'Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
Heroic prizes and exequial games;
The gods assented; and around thee lay
Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day.
Oft have I seen with solemn funeral games
Heroes and kings committed to the flames;
But strength of youth, or valour of the brave,
With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
Such were the games by azure Thetis given;
And such thy honours, O belov'd of heaven!
Dear to mankind thy fame survives; nor fades
Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.
But what to me avail my honours gone,
Successful toils, and battles bravely won?
Doom'd by stern Jove, at home to end my life,
By curs'd Ægisthus, and a faithless wife!

Thus they:—while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.
On each majestic form they cast a view;
And timorous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
His ancient host Amphimedon survey'd:
'Son of Melanthius! (he began) O say!
What cause compell'd so many, and so gay,
To tread the downward melancholy way?
Say, could one city yield a troop so fair?
Were all these partners of one native air?
Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep?
Did nightly thieves, or pirates' cruel bands,
Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's sands?
Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,
Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?
Inform thy guest, for such I was of yore
When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore;

Forc'd a long month the wintry seas to bear,
To move the great Ulysses to the war.'

' O king of men! I faithful shall relate
(Replied Amphimedon) our hapless fate.
Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
With rival loves pursued his royal dame:
Her coy reserve, and prudence mix'd with pride,
Our common suit nor granted, nor denied;
But close with inward hate our deaths design'd;
Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.
Her hand, laborious, in delusion, spread
A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread;
" Ye peers (she cried), who press to gain my heart,
Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part,
Yet a short space, your rival-suit suspend,
Till this funereal web my labours end:
Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
A task of grief, his ornaments of death:
Lest, when the fates his royal ashes claim,
The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;
Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."

' The fiction pleas'd: our generous train complies;
Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.
The work she plied; but, studious of delay,
Each following night revers'd the toils of day.
Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail;
The fourth, her maid reveal'd the' amazing tale.
And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
The backward labours of her faithless hand.
Forc'd, she completes it; and before us lay
The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
Display'd the radiance of the night and day.

' Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil,
Ill fortune led Ulysses to our isle.
Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay:
Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
And speedy lands, and secretly confers.
They plan our future ruin, and resort
Confederate to the city and the court.

First came the son; the father next succeeds,
Clad like a beggar, whom Eumæus leads;
Propp'd on a staff, deform'd with age and care,
And hung with rags that flutter'd in the air.
Who could Ulysses in that form behold?
Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,
Ill us'd by all!—to every wrong resign'd,
Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind.
But when, arising in his wrath to' obey
The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way;
The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
Careful he treasur'd in a private room:
Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose
The archer's strife; the source of future woes,
And omen of our death!—In vain we drew
The twanging string, and tried the stubborn yew:
To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands;
In vain we threat; Telemachus commands:
The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent;
Through every ring the victor arrow went.
Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood,
Pour'd forth the darts, that thirsted for our blood,
And frown'd before us, dreadful as a god!
First bleeds Antinous: thick the shafts resound;
And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground;
This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall;
Some god assisted, and unmann'd us all:
Ignoble cries precede the dying groans;
And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.
' Thus, great Atrides! thus Ulysses drove
The shades thou seest, from yon fair realms above.
Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor.
No friend to bathe our wounds! or tears to shed
O'er the pale corpse,—the honours of the dead.'
' Oh bless'd Ulysses (thus the king express'd
His sudden rapture), in thy consort bless'd!
Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue, shin'd;
Not more thy patience, than her constant mind:
Icarius' daughter, glory of the past,
And model to the future age, shall last:

The gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
(Their great reward) a poet in her praise.
Not such, O Tyndarus ! thy daughter's deed,
By whose dire hand her king and husband bled :
Her shall the Muse to infamy prolong,
Example dread ! and theme of tragic song !
The general sex shall suffer in her shame ;
And e'en the best that bears a woman's name.'

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
Conferr'd the mournful phantoms of the dead :
While from the town, Ulysses, and his band,
Pass'd to Laertes' cultivated land.
The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain ;
And labour made the rugged soil a plain.
There stood his mansion of the rural sort,
With useful buildings round the lowly court :
Where the few servants that divide his care,
Took their laborious rest, and homely fare ;
And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
With constant duty tends his drooping age.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
And martial son, Ulysses gave command :
' Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
Select the largest to the powers divine.
Alone, and unattended, let me try
If yet I share the old man's memory :
If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know,
(Their light and dearest object long ago)
Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with woe ?'

Then to his train he gives his spear and shield ;
The house they enter ; and he seeks the field,
Through rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd,
And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round.
Nor aged Dolius nor his sons were there :
Nor servants, absent on another care ;
To search the woods for sets of flowery thorn,
Their orchard-bounds to strengthen and adorn.

But all alone the hoary king he found :
His habit coarse, but warmly wrapp'd around ;
His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,
Fenc'd with a double cap of goatskin hair :

His buskins old, in former service torn,
But well repair'd ; and gloves against the thorn.
In this array the kingly gardener stood,
And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.

Beneath a neighbouring tree, the chief divine
Gaz'd o'er his sire, retracing every line,
The ruins of himself! now worn away
With age, yet still majestic in decay!
Sudden his eyes releas'd their watery store;
The much-enduring man could bear no more.
Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace
His aged limbs, to kiss his reverend face,
With eager transport to disclose the whole,
And pour at once the torrent of his soul.—
Not so:—his judgment takes the winding way
Of question distant, and of soft essay;
More gentle methods on weak age employs,
And moves the sorrows, to enhance the joys.
Then, to his sire with beating heart he moves;
And with a tender pleasantry reproves:
Who digging round the plant still hangs his head,
Nor aught remits the work, while thus he said:

‘ Great is thy skill, O father! great thy toil:
Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil,
Thy squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear;
And not one empty spot escapes thy care.
On every plant and tree thy cares are shown;
Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.
Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame;
Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim.
Not for thy sloth, I deem thy lord unkind;
Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind:
I read a monarch in that princely air,
The same thy aspect, if the same thy care;
Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine,
These are the rights of age, and should be thine.
Who then thy master, say? and whose the land
So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?
But chief, O tell me! (what I question most)
Is this the far-fam'd Ithacensian coast?

For so reported the first man I view'd
(Some surly islander, of manners rude),
Nor further conference vouchsaf'd to stay;
Heedless he whistled, and pursued his way.
But thou! whom years have taught to understand,
Humanely hear, and answer my demand:
A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave;
Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave?
Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)
When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest;
He said from Ithaca's fair isle he came,
And old Laertes was his father's name.
To him, whatever to a guest is ow'd
I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd;
To him seven talents of pure ore I told,
Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunics stiff with gold,
A bowl, that rich with polish'd silver flames;
And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.'

At this the father, with a father's fears
(His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears :)
' This is the land; but, ah! thy gifts are lost,
For godless men, and rude, possess the coast:
Sunk is the glory of this once fam'd shore!
Thy ancient friend, O stranger, is no more!
Full recompense thy bounty else had borne;
For every good man yields a just return:
So civil rights demand; and who begins
The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.

' But tell me, stranger, be the truth confess'd,
What years have circled since thou saw'st that guest?
That hapless guest, alas! for ever gone!
(Wretch that he was; and that I am!) my son!
If ever man to misery was born,
'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn!
Far from his friends, and from his native reign,
He lies, a prey to monsters of the main;
Or savage beasts his mangled reliques tear,
Or screaming vultures scatter through the air:
Nor could his mother funeral unguents shed;
Nor wail'd his father o'er the untimely dead;
Nor his sad consort, on the mournful bier,
Seal'd his cold eyes, or dropp'd a tender tear!

‘ But tell me, who thou art, and what thy race?
Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place?
Or if a merchant in pursuit of gain,
What port receiv’d thy vessel from the main?
Or com’st thou single, or attend thy train?’

Then thus the son:—‘ From Alybas I came,
My palace there; Eperitus my name.
Not vulgar born; from Aphidas, the king
Of Polypemon’s royal line, I spring.
Some adverse dæmon from Sicania bore
Our wandering course, and drove us on your shore:
Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
Reliev’d our wearied vessel from the sea.
Five years have circled since these eyes pursued
Ulysses parting through the sable flood;
Prosperous he sail’d, with dexter auguries,
And all the wing’d good omens of the skies.
Well hop’d we, then, to meet on this fair shore;
Whom heaven, alas! decreed to meet no more.’

Quick through the father’s heart these accents ran,
Grief seiz’d at once, and wrapp’d up all the man:
Deep from his soul he sigh’d, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.
Trembling with agonies of strong delight,
Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight:
He ran, he seiz’d him with a strict embrace,—
With thousand kisses wander’d o’er his face,
‘ I, I am he;—O father, rise!—behold
Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old;
Thy son,—so long desir’d, so long detain’d,—
Restor’d, and breathing in his native land:
These floods of sorrow, oh my sire, restrain!
The vengeance is complete; the suitor-train,
Stretch’d in our palace, by these hands lie slain.’

Amaz’d, Laertes:—‘ Give some certain sign,
(If such thou art) to manifest thee mine.’
‘ Lo here the wound (he cries) receiv’d of yore,
The scar indented by the tusky boar,
When by thyself and by Anticlea sent,
To old Autolycus’s realms I went.
Yet by another sign thy offspring know:
The several trees you gave me long ago,

While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace
And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace ;
To every plant in order as we came,
Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name ;
Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd ;
Twelve pear-trees bowing with their pendent load,
And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd ;
Full fifty purple figs ; and many a row
Of various vines that then began to blow,
A future vintage ! when the Hours produce
Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice.'

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,
His heart within him melts ; his knees sustain
Their feeble weight no more ; his arms alone
Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown :
He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd :
Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.
Soon as returning life regains its seat,
And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat ;
' Yes, I believe (he cries) almighty Jove !
Heaven rules us yet, and gods there are above.
'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid—
But what shall guard us, if the town invade ?
If, while the news through every city flies,
All Ithaca and Cephallenia rise ?'

To this Ulysses :—' As the gods shall please,
Be all the rest ; and set thy soul at ease.
Haste to the cottage by this orchard side ;
And take the banquet which our cares provide :
There wait thy faithful band of rural friends ;
And there the young Telemachus attends.'

Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,
And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.
The swains and young Telemachus they found,
The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.
The hoary king, his old Sicilian maid
Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.
Pallas attending gives his frame to shine
With awful port, and majesty divine ;
His gazing son admires the godlike grace,
And air celestial dawning o'er his face.

‘What god (he cried) my father’s form improves?
How high he treads, and how enlarg’d he moves!’

‘Oh! would to all the deathless powers on high,
Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!

(Replied the king, elated with his praise)

My strength were still, as once in better days:

When the bold Cephalens the leaguer form’d,

And proud Nericus trembled as I storm’d.

Such were I now, not absent from your deed

When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed,

This arm had aided yours; this hand bestrown

Our floors with death, and push’d the slaughter on;

Nor had the sire been separate from the son.’

They commun’d thus:—while homeward bent their
way

The swains, fatigued with labours of the day;

Dolius the first, the venerable man;

And next his sons, a long-succeeding train:

For due refection to the bower they came,

Call’d by the careful old Sicilian dame,

Who nurs’d the children, and now tends the sire:

They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.

On chairs and beds in order seated round,

They share the gladsome board; the roofs resound.

While thus Ulysses to his ancient friend:

‘Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend;

The rites have waited long.’ The chief commands

Their loves in vain; old Dolius spreads his hands,

Springs to his master with a warm embrace,

And fastens kisses on his hands and face;

Then thus broke out:—‘Oh long, oh daily mourn’d,

Beyond our hopes, and to our wish, return’d!

Conducted sure by heaven! for heaven alone

Could work this wonder: welcome to thy own!

And joys and happiness attend thy throne!

Who knows thy bless’d, thy wish’d return? O say,

To the chaste queen shall we the news convey?

Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day?’

‘Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride

Already is it known.’ The king replied,

And straight resum’d his seat; while round him bows

Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows:

Then all beneath their father take their place,
Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying fame the swift report had spread
Through all the city, of the suitors dead.
In throngs they rise, and to the palace crowd ;
Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.
Weeping, they bear the mangled heaps of slain,
Inhume the natives in their native plain,
The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main.

Then sad in council all the seniors sat,
Frequent and full, assembled to debate.
Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes :
The bold Antinous was his age's pride,
The first who by Ulysses' arrow died.

Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
As, mixing words with sighs, he thus began :

‘ Great deeds, O friends ! this wondrous man has
wrought,

And mighty blessings to his country brought.
With ships he parted, and a numerous train ;
Those, and their ships, he buried in the main :
Now he returns, and first essays his hand
In the best blood of all his native land.
Haste then, and ere to neighbouring Pyle he flies,
Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies,
Arise (or ye for ever fall), arise !
Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed,
If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed !
Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head,
Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.’

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall
Spoke when he ceas'd !—dumb sorrow touch'd them all.
When from the palace to the wondering throng
Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along ;
(Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke)
And Medon first the' assembled chiefs bespoke :

‘ Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
Who deem this act the work of mortal hand !
As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode,
These eyes, these eyes beheld a present god,

Who now before him, now beside him stood,
Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with blood :
In vain old Mentor's form the god belied ;
'Twas heaven that struck, and heaven was on his side.'

A sudden horror all the' assembly shook ;
When, slowly rising, Halitherses spoke
(Reverend and wise, whose comprehensive view
At once the present and the future knew :)
' Me too, ye fathers, hear !—from you proceed
The ills ye mourn ; your own the guilty deed.
Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons, the rein
(Oft warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain :)
An absent hero's bed they sought to soil ;
An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil :
Immoderate riot, and intemperate lust !
The' offence was great, the punishment was just.
Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale ;
Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail.'

His moderate words some better minds persuade :
They part, and join him, but the number stay'd.
They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,
And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.
They case their limbs in brass ; to arms they run :
The broad effulgence blazes in the sun.
Before the city, and in ample plain,
They meet ; Eupithes heads the frantic train.
Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air ;
Fate hears them not, and death attends him there.

This pass'd on earth, while in the realms above
Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove :
' May I presume to search thy secret soul ?
O power supreme, O ruler of the whole !
Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state,
Or peaceful amity, or stern debate ?
Declare thy purpose ; for thy will is fate.'

' Is not thy thought my own ? (the god replies
Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies)
Hath not long since thy knowing soul decreed,
The chief's return should make the guilty bleed ?
'Tis done ; and at thy will the fates succeed.
Yet hear the issue :—since Ulysses' hand
Has slain the suitors, heaven shall bless the land.

None now the kindred of the' unjust shall own ;
Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son :
Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,
And o'er the past, oblivion stretch her wing.
Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,
His people blessing, by his people bless'd.
LET ALL BE PEACE.'—He said, and gave the nod
That binds the fates ; the sanction of the god :
And, prompt to execute the' eternal will,
Descended Pallas from the' Olympian hill.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast,
The rage of hunger and of thirst repress'd :
To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent :
A son of Dolius on the message went,
Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
The foe approach, embattled on the field.
With backward step he hastens to the bower,
And tells the news. They arm with all their power.
Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace ;
And six were all the sons of Dolius' race :
Old Dolius too his rusted arms put on ;
And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone.
Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,
And brazen panoply invests the band.
The opening gates at once their war display :
Fierce they rush forth : Ulysses leads the way.
That moment joins them with celestial aid,
In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended maid :
The suffering hero felt his patient breast
Swell with new joy, and thus his son address'd :
' Behold, Telemachus ! nor fear the sight !
The brave embattled ; the grim front of fight !
The valiant with the valiant must contend :
Shame not the line whence glorious you descend :
Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread ;
Regard thyself, the living, and the dead.'

' Thy eyes, great father ! on this battle cast,
Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.'

So spoke Telemachus ! the gallant boy
Good old Laertes heard with panting joy ;
' And, bless'd ! thrice bless'd this happy day ! (he cries)
The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes,

A son and grandson of the' Arcesian name
Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame !'

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear :

' Son of Arcesius, reverend warrior, hear !
Jove and Jove's daughter first implore in pray'r,
Then, whirling high, discharge thy lance in air.'
She said, infusing courage with the word,
Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implor'd,
And, whirling high, dismiss'd the lance in air :
Full at Eupithes drove the deathful spear :
The brass-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound,
He falls, earth thunders, and his arms resound.

Before the father and the conquering son
Heaps rush on heaps : they fight, they drop, they run.
Now by the sword and now the javelin fall
The rebel-race ! and death had swallow'd all ;
But from on high the blue-ey'd virgin cried ;
Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide :
' Forbear, ye nations ! your mad hands forbear
From mutual slaughter : PEACE DESCENDS TO SPARE.'
Fear shook the nations : at the voice divine
' They drop their javelins, and their rage resign.
All scatter'd round their glittering weapons lie ;
Some fall to earth, and some confus'dly fly.
With dreadful shouts Ulysses pour'd along,
Swift as an eagle, as an eagle strong.
But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims ;
Before Minerva shot the livid flames ;
Blazing they fell, and at her feet expir'd :
Then stopp'd the goddess, trembled, and retir'd.

' Descended from the gods ! Ulysses, cease :
Offend not Jove : obey, and give the peace.'

So Pallas spoke : the mandate from above
The king obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove,
In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord,
' And willing nations knew their lawful lord.'

POSTSCRIPT.

BY

MR. POPE.

I CANNOT dismiss this work without a few observations on the true character and style of it. Whoever reads the *Odyssey* with an eye to the *Iliad*, expecting to find it of the same character, or of the same sort of spirit, will be grievously deceived; and err against the first principle of criticism, which is to consider the nature of the piece, and the intent of its author. The *Odyssey* is a moral and political work, instructive to all degrees of men, and filled with images, examples, and precepts of civil and domestic life. Homer is here a person

‘ Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat et quid amicis,
Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus, et hospes.
Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius æ melius Chrysippo ac Crantore dicit.

A. P. 312, I Ep. ii. 3, 4.

The *Odyssey* is the reverse of the *Iliad*, in moral, subject, manner, and style; to which it has no sort of relation, but as the story happens to follow in order of time, and as some of the same persons are actors in it. Yet from this incidental connexion many have been misled to regard it as a continuation or second part, and thence to expect a parity of character inconsistent with its nature.

It is no wonder that the common reader should fall into this mistake, when so great a critic as Longinus seems not wholly free from it; although what he has said has been generally understood to import a severer censure of the *Odyssey* than it really does, if we consider

the occasion on which it is introduced, and the circumstances to which it is confined.

‘ The Odyssey (says he) is an instance, how natural it is to a great genius, when it begins to grow old and decline, to delight itself in narrations and fables: for, that Homer composed the Odyssey after the Iliad, many proofs may be given, &c. From hence in my judgment it proceeds, that as the Iliad was written while his spirit was in its greatest vigour, the whole structure of that work is dramatic and full of action: whereas the greater part of the Odyssey is employed in narration, which is the taste of old age; so that in this latter piece we may compare him to the setting sun, which has still the same greatness, but not the same ardour, or force. He speaks not in the same strain: we see no more that sublime of the Iliad which marches on with a constant pace, without ever being stopped or retarded; there appears no more that hurry, and that strong tide of motions and passions, pouring one after another: there is no more the same fury, or the same volubility of diction, so suitable to action, and all along drawing in such innumerable images of nature. But Homer, like the ocean, is always great, even when he ebbs and retires; even when he is lowest, and loses himself most in narrations and incredible fictions: as instances of this, we cannot forget the descriptions of tempests, the adventures of Ulysses with the Cyclops, and many others. But though all this be age, it is the age of Homer:—and it may be said, for the credit of these fictions, that they are beautiful dreams, or if you will, the dreams of Jupiter himself. I spoke of the Odyssey only to show, that the greatest poets, when their genius wants strength and warmth for the pathetic, for the most part employ themselves in painting the manners. This Homer has done, in characterizing the suitors, and describing their way of life; which is properly a branch of comedy, whose peculiar business it is to represent the manners of men.’

We must first observe, it is the sublime of which Longinus is writing: that, and not the nature of Homer’s poem, is his subject. After having highly extolled the sublimity and fire of the Iliad, he justly observes the Odyssey to have less of those qualities,

and to turn more on the side of moral, and reflections on human life. Nor is it his business here to determine, whether the elevated spirit of the one, or the just moral of the other, be the greater excellence in itself.

Secondly, that fire and fury of which he is speaking, cannot well be meant of the general spirit and inspiration which is to run through a whole epic poem, but of that particular warmth and impetuosity necessary in some parts, to image or represent actions or passions, of haste, tumult, and violence. It is on occasion of citing some such particular passages in Homer, that Longinus breaks into this reflection; which seems to determine his meaning chiefly to that sense.

Upon the whole, he affirms the *Odyssey* to have less sublimity and fire than the *Iliad*; but he does not say it wants the sublime or wants fire. He affirms it to be narrative; but not that the narration is defective. He affirms it to abound in fictions; not that those fictions are ill invented, or ill executed. He affirms it to be nice and particular in painting the manners; but not that those manners are ill painted. If Homer has fully in these points accomplished his own design, and done all that the nature of his poem demanded or allowed, it still remains perfect in its kind, and as much a masterpiece as the *Iliad*.

The amount of the passage is this: that in his own particular taste, and with respect to the sublime, Longinus preferred the *Iliad*: and because the *Odyssey* was less active and lofty, he judged it the work of the old age of Homer.

If this opinion be true, it will only prove, that Homer's age might determine him in the choice of his subject; not that it affected him in the execution of it: and that which would be a very wrong instance to prove the decay of his imagination, is a very good one to evince the strength of his judgment. For had he (as Madam Dacier observes) composed the *Odyssey* in his youth, and the *Iliad* in his age, both must in reason have been exactly the same as they now stand. To blame Homer for his choice of such a subject, as did not admit the same incidents and the same pomp of

style as his former, is to take offence at too much variety, and to imagine, that when a man has written one good thing, he must ever after only copy himself.

The Battle of Constantine, and the School of Athens, are both pieces of Raphael. Shall we censure the School of Athens as faulty, because it has not the fury and fire of the other? or shall we say, that Raphael was grown old, because he chose to represent the manners of old men and philosophers? There is all the silence, tranquillity, and composure in the one, and all the warmth, hurry, and tumult in the other, which the subject of either required: both of them had been imperfect, if they had not been as they are. And let the painter or poet be young or old, who designs and performs in this manner, it proves him to have made the piece at a time of life when he was master not only of his art, but of his discretion.

Aristotle makes no such distinction between the two poems: he constantly cites them with equal praise, and draws the rules and examples equally from both. But it is rather to the *Odyssey* that Horace gives the preference, in the *Epistle to Lollius*, and in the *Art of Poetry*. It is remarkable how opposite his opinion is to that of Longinus: and that the particulars he chooses to extol, are those very fictions, and pictures of the manners, which the other seems least to approve. Those fables and manners are of the very essence of the work: but even without that regard, the fables themselves have both more invention and more instruction, and the manners more moral and example, than those of the *Iliad*.

In some points (and those the most essential to the epic poem) the *Odyssey* is confessed to excel the *Iliad*, and principally in the great end of it, the moral. The conduct, turn, and disposition of the fable is also what the critics allow to be the better model for epic writers to follow: accordingly we find much more of the cast of this poem than of the other in the *Æneid*; and (what next to that is perhaps the greatest example) in the *Telemachus*. In the manners, it is no way inferior: Longinus is so far from finding any defect in these, that he rather taxes Homer with painting them too minutely. As to the narrations, although they are more numerous

as the occasions are more frequent, yet they carry no more the marks of old age, and are neither more prolix nor more circumstantial, than the conversations and dialogues of the Iliad. Not to mention the length of those of Phoenix in the ninth book, and of Nestor in the eleventh (which may be thought in compliance to their characters), those of Glaucus in the sixth, of Æneas in the twentieth, and some others, must be allowed to exceed any in the whole Odyssey. And that the propriety of style, and the numbers, in the narrations of each are equal, will appear to any who compare them.

To form a right judgment, whether the genius of Homer had suffered any decay, we must consider, in both his poems, such parts as are of a similar nature, and will bear comparison. And it is certain we shall find in each, the same vivacity and fecundity of invention, the same life and strength of imaging and colouring, the particular descriptions as highly painted, the figures as bold, the metaphors as animated, and the numbers as harmonious and as various.

The Odyssey is a perpetual source of poetry: the stream is not the less full for being gentle; though it is true (when we speak only with regard to the sublime) that a river, foaming and thundering in cataracts from rocks and precipices, is what more strikes, amazes, and fills the mind, than the same body of water, flowing afterwards through peaceful vales and agreeable scenes of pasturage.

The Odyssey (as I have before said) ought to be considered according to its own nature and design; not with an eye to the Iliad. To censure Homer because it is unlike what it was never meant to resemble, is, as if a gardener who had purposely cultivated two beautiful trees of contrary natures, as a specimen of his skill in the several kinds, should be blamed for not bringing them into pairs; when in root, stem, leaf, and flower, each was so entirely different, that one must have been spoiled in the endeavour to match the other.

Longinus, who saw this poem was 'partly of the nature of comedy,' ought not, for that very reason, to have considered it with a view to the Iliad. How little any such resemblance was the intention of Homer, may appear hence, that although the character of Ulys-

ses there was already drawn, yet here he purposely turns to another side of it, and shows him not in that full light of glory, but in the shade of common life, with a mixture of such qualities as are requisite to all the lowest accidents of it, struggling with misfortunes, and on a level with the meanest of mankind. As for the other persons, none of them are above what we call the higher comedy: Calypso, though a goddess, is a character of intrigue; the suitors yet more approaching to it; the Phæacians are of the same cast; the Cyclops, Melanthius, and Irus, descend even to droll characters; and the scenes that appear throughout, are generally of the comic kind; banquets, revels, sports, loves, and the pursuit of a woman.

From the nature of the poem, we shall form an idea of the style. The diction is to follow the images, and to take its colour from the complexion of the thoughts. Accordingly the Odyssey is not always clothed in the majesty of verse proper to tragedy; but sometimes descends into the plainer narrative, and sometimes even to that familiar dialogue essential to comedy. However, where it cannot support a sublimity, it always preserves a dignity, or at least a propriety,

There is a real beauty in an easy, pure, perspicuous description even of a low action. There are numerous instances of this both in Homer and Virgil: and perhaps those natural passages are not the least pleasing of their works. It is often the same in history, where the representations of common, or even domestic things in clear, plain, and natural words, are frequently found to make the liveliest impression on the reader.

The question is, how far a poet, in pursuing the description or image of an action, can attach himself to little circumstances, without vulgarity or trifling? what particulars are proper, and enliven the image; or what are impertinent, and clog it? In this matter painting is to be consulted, and the whole regard had to those circumstances which contribute to form a full, and yet not a confused idea of a thing.

Epithets are of vast service to this effect: and the right use of these is often the only expedient to render the narration poetical.

The great point of judgment is to distinguish when to

speaking simply, and when figuratively: but whenever the poet is obliged by the nature of his subject to descend to the lower manner of writing, an elevated style would be affected, and therefore ridiculous; and the more he was forced upon figures and metaphors to avoid that lowness, the more the image would be broken, and consequently obscure.

One may add, that the use of the grand style on little subjects is not only ludicrous, but a sort of transgression against the rules of proportion and mechanics: it is using a vast force to lift a feather.

I believe, now I am upon this head, it will be found a just observation, that the low actions of life cannot be put into a figurative style without being ridiculous; but things natural can. Metaphors raise the latter into dignity, as we see in the *Georgics*: but throw the former into ridicule, as in the *Lutrin*. I think this may very well be accounted for: laughter implies censure; inanimate and irrational beings are not objects of censure; therefore these may be elevated as much as you please, and no ridicule follows: but when rational beings are represented above their real character, it becomes ridiculous in art, because it is vicious in morality. The bees in Virgil, were they rational beings, would be ridiculous by having their actions and manners represented on a level with creatures so superior as men; since it would imply folly or pride, which are the proper objects of ridicule.

The use of pompous expression, for low actions or thoughts, is the true sublime of *Don Quixote*. How far unfit it is for epic poetry, appears in its being the perfection of the mock epic. It is so far from being the sublime of tragedy, that it is the cause of all bombast: when poets, instead of being (as they imagine) constantly lofty, only preserve throughout a painful equality of fustian; that continued swell of language (which runs indiscriminately even through their lowest characters, and rattles like some mightiness of meaning in the most indifferent subjects) is of a piece with that perpetual elevation of tone which the players have learned from it; and which is not speaking, but vociferating.

There is still more reason for a variation of style in

epic poetry than in tragic, to distinguish between that language of the gods proper to the muse who sings, and is inspired, and that of men who are introduced speaking only according to nature. Further, there ought to be a difference of style observed in the speeches of human persons, and those of deities; and again, in those which may be called set harangues, or orations, and those which are only conversation or dialogue. Homer has more of the latter than any other poet: what Virgil does by two or three words of narration, Homer still performs by speeches; not only replies, but even rejoinders are frequent in him; a practice almost unknown to Virgil. This renders his poems more animated; but less grave and majestic: and consequently necessitates the frequent use of a lower style. The writers of tragedy lie under the same necessity, if they would copy nature: whereas that painted and poetical diction which they perpetually use, would be improper even in orations designed to move with all the arts of rhetoric. This is plain from the practice of Demosthenes and Cicero; and Virgil, in those of Drances and Turnus, gives an eminent example, how far removed the style of them ought to be from such an excess of figures and ornaments: which indeed fits only that language of the gods we have been speaking of, or that of a muse under inspiration.

To read through a whole work in this strain, is like travelling all along on the ridge of a hill; which is not half so agreeable as sometimes gradually to rise, and sometimes gently to descend, as the way leads, and as the end of the journey directs.

Indeed the true reason that so few poets have imitated Homer in these lower parts, has been the extreme difficulty of preserving that mixture of ease and dignity essential to them. For it is as hard for an epic poem to stoop to the narrative with success, as for a prince to descend to be familiar, without diminution to his greatness.

The sublime style is more easily counterfeited than the natural: something that passes for it, or sounds like it, is common in all false writers: but nature, purity, perspicuity, and simplicity, never walk in the clouds:

they are obvious to all capacities; and where they are not evident, they do not exist.

The most plain narration not only admits of these, and of harmony (which are all the qualities of style), but it requires every one of them to render it pleasing. On the contrary, whatever pretends to a share of the sublime, may pass, notwithstanding any defects in the rest; nay, sometimes without any of them, and gain the admiration of all ordinary readers.

Homer, in his lowest narrations or speeches, is ever easy, flowing, copious clear, and harmonious. He shows no less invention, in assembling the humbler than the greater thoughts and images; no less judgment, in proportioning the style and the versification to these, than to the other. Let it be remembered, that the same genius that soared the highest, and from whom the greatest models of the sublime are derived, was also he who stooped the lowest, and gave to the simple narrative its utmost perfection. Which of these was the harder task to Homer himself, I cannot pretend to determine; but to his translator I can affirm (however unequal all his imitations must be) that of the latter has been much more difficult.

Whoever expects here the same pomp of verse, and the same ornaments of diction, as in the Iliad, will, and ought to be disappointed. Were the original otherwise, it had been an offence against nature: and were the translation so, it were an offence against Homer; which is the same thing.

It must be allowed, that there is a majesty and harmony in the Greek language which greatly contribute to elevate and support the narration. But I must also observe, that this is an advantage grown upon the language since Homer's time: for things are removed from vulgarity by being out of use; and if the words we could find in any present language were equally sonorous or musical in themselves, they would still appear less poetical and uncommon than those of a dead one, from this only circumstance, of being in every man's mouth. I may add to this, another disadvantage to a translator, from a different cause: Homer seems to have taken upon him the character of an historian, antiquary,

divine, and professor of arts and sciences, as well as a poet. In one or other of these characters he descends into many particularities, which as a poet only perhaps he would have avoided. All these ought to be preserved by a faithful translator; who in some measure takes the place of Homer: and all that can be expected from him is to make them as poetical as the subject will bear. Many arts, therefore, are requisite to supply these disadvantages; in order to dignify and solemnize these plainer parts, which hardly admit of any poetical ornaments.

Some use has been made to this end of the style of Milton. A just and moderate mixture of old words may have an effect like the working old abbey stones into a building; which I have sometimes seen to give a kind of venerable air, and yet not destroy the neatness, elegance, and equality, requisite to a new work. I mean without rendering it too unfamiliar, or remote from the present purity of writing, or from that ease and smoothness which ought always to accompany narration or dialogue. In reading a style judiciously antiquated, one finds a pleasure not unlike that of travelling on an old Roman way: but then the road must be as good as the way is ancient; the style must be such in which we may evenly proceed, without being put to short stops by sudden abruptnesses, or puzzled by frequent turnings and transpositions. No man delights in furrows and stumbling blocks: and let our love to antiquity be ever so great, a fine ruin is one thing, and a heap of rubbish another. The imitators of Milton, like most other imitators, are not copies but caricatures of their original; they are a hundred times more obsolete and cramp than he, and equally so in all places: whereas it should have been observed of Milton, that he is not lavish of his exotic words and phrases every where alike; but employs them much more where the subject is marvellous, vast, and strange, as in the scenes of heaven, hell, chaos, &c. than where it is turned to the natural and agreeable, as in the pictures of paradise, the loves of our first parents, the entertainments of angels, and the like. In general, this unusual style better serves to awaken our ideas in the descriptions and in the imaging and pic-

turesque parts, than it agrees with the lower sort of narrations, the character of which is simplicity and purity. Milton has several of the latter, where we find not an antiquated, affected, or uncouth word, for some hundred lines together; as in the fifth book, the latter part of the eighth, the former of the tenth and eleventh books, and in the narration of Michael in the twelfth. I wonder indeed that he, who ventured (contrary to the practice of all other epic poets) to imitate Homer's lowness in the narrative, should not also have copied his plainness and perspicuity in the dramatic parts: since in his speeches (where clearness above all is necessary) there is frequently such transposition and forced construction, that the very sense is not to be discovered without a second or third reading: and in this certainly he ought to be no example.

To preserve the true character of Homer's style in the present translation, great pains have been taken to be easy and natural. The chief merit I can pretend to is, not to have been carried into a more plausible and figurative manner of writing, which would better have pleased all readers but the judicious ones. My errors had been fewer, had each of those gentlemen who joined with me shown as much of the severity of a friend to me, as I did to them, in a strict animadversion and correction. What assistance I received from them, was made known in general to the public in the original proposals for this work, and the particulars are specified at the conclusion of it; to which I must add (to be punctually just), some part of the tenth and fifteenth books. The reader will now be too good a judge, how much the greater part of it, and consequently of its faults, is chargeable upon me alone. But this I can with integrity affirm, that I have bestowed as much time and pains upon the whole as were consistent with the indispensable duties and cares of life, and with that wretched state of health which God has been pleased to make my portion. At the least, it is a pleasure to me to reflect, that I have introduced into our language this other work of the greatest and most ancient of poets, with some dignity; and, I hope, with as little disadvantage as the *Iliad*. And if, after the unmerited success of that translation, any one will wonder why I would enter-

prise the Odyssey, I think it sufficient to say, that Homer himself did the same, or the world would never have seen it.

I designed to have ended this postscript here; but since I am now taking my leave of Homer, and of all controversy relating to him, I beg leave to be indulged, if I make use of this last opportunity, to say a very few words about some reflections which the late Madam Dacier bestowed on the first part of my preface to the Iliad, and which she published at the end of her translation of that poem.

To write gravely an answer to them would be too much for the reflections; and to say nothing concerning them, would be too little for the author. It is owing to the industry of that learned lady, that our polite neighbours are become acquainted with many of Homer's beauties, which were hidden from them before in Greek and in Eustathius. She challenges on this account a particular regard from all the admirers of that great poet: and I hope that I shall be thought, as I mean, to pay some part of this debt to her memory in what I am now writing.

Had these reflections fallen from the pen of an ordinary critic, I should not have apprehended their effect; and should therefore have been silent concerning them; but since they are Madam Dacier's, I imagine that they must be of weight; and in a case where I think her reasoning very bad, I respect her authority.

I have fought under Madam Dacier's banner, and have waged war in defence of the divine Homer against all the heretics of the age. And yet it is Madam Dacier who accuses me, and who accuses me of nothing less than betraying our common cause. She affirms, that the most declared enemies of this author have never said any thing against him more injurious or more unjust than I. What must the world think of me, after such a judgment passed by so great a critic: the world, who decides so often, and who examines so seldom; the world, who, even in matters of literature, is almost always the slave of authority? Who will suspect that so much learning should mistake, that so much accuracy should be misled, or that so much candour should be biassed?

All this, however, has happened: and Madam Dacier's criticisms on my preface flow from the very same error, from which so many false criticisms of her countrymen upon Homer have flowed, and which she has so justly and so severely reprov'd; I mean the error of depending on injurious and unskilful translations.

An indifferent translation may be of some use; and a good one will be of a great deal. But I think that no translation ought to be the ground of criticism; because no man ought to be condemned upon another man's explanation of his meaning.—Could Homer have had the honour of explaining his, before that august tribunal where Monsieur de la Motte presides, I make no doubt but he had escaped many of those severe animadversions with which some French authors have loaded him; and from which even Madam Dacier's translation of the Iliad could not preserve him.

How unhappy was it for me, that the knowledge of our island-tongue was as necessary to Madam Dacier in my case, as the knowledge of Greek was to Monsieur de la Motte in that of our great author: or to any of those whom she styles 'blind censurers,' and blames for condemning what they did not understand.

I may say with modesty, that she knew less of my true sense, from that faulty translation of part of my preface, than those blind censurers might have known of Homer's, even from the translation of la Valterie, which preceded her own.

It pleased me, however, to find, that her objections were not levelled at the general doctrine, or at any essentials of my preface; but only at a few particular expressions. She proposed little more than (to use her own phrase) 'to combat two or three similes;' and I hope, that to combat a simile is no more than to fight with a shadow, since a simile is no better than the shadow of an argument.

She lays much weight where I laid but little; and examines with more scrupulosity than I writ, or than perhaps the matter requires.

These unlucky similes, taken by themselves, may perhaps render my meaning equivocal to an ignorant translator; or there may have fallen from my pen some expressions, which, taken by themselves likewise, may to

the same person have the same effect. But if the translator had been master of our tongue, the general tenour of my argument, that which precedes and that which follows the passages objected to, would have sufficiently determined him as to the precise meaning of them: and if Madam Dacier had taken up her pen a little more leisurely, or had employed it with more temper, she would not have answered paraphrases of her own, which even the translation will not justify, and which say, more than once, the very contrary to what I have said in the passages themselves.

If any person has curiosity enough to read the whole paragraphs in my preface, or some mangled parts of which these reflections are made, he will easily discern that I am as orthodox as Madam Dacier herself in those very articles on which she treats me like an heretic: he will easily see, that all the difference between us consists in this, that I offer opinions, and she delivers doctrines; that my imagination represents Homer as the greatest of human poets, whereas in hers he was exalted above humanity; infallibility and impeccability were two of his attributes. There was, therefore, no need of defending Homer against me: who (if I mistake not) had carried my admiration of him as far as it can be carried, without giving a real occasion of writing in his defence.

After answering my harmless similes, she proceeds to a matter which does not regard so much the honour of Homer, as that of the times he lived in: and here I must confess she does not wholly mistake my meaning; but I think she mistakes the state of the question. She had said, the manners of those times were so much the better, the less they were like ours. I thought this required a little qualification. I confessed that, in my opinion, the world was mended in some points: such as the custom of putting whole nations to the sword, condemning kings and their families to perpetual slavery, and a few others. Madam Dacier judges otherwise in this: but as to the rest, particularly in preferring the simplicity of the ancient world to the luxury of ours, which is the main point contended for, she owns we agree. This I thought was well: but I am so unfortunate that this too is taken amiss, and called adopting, or (if you

will) stealing her sentiment. The truth is, she might have said, her words; for I used them on purpose; being then professedly citing from her: though I might have done the same without intending that compliment; for they are also to be found in Eustathius, and the sentiment I believe is that of all mankind. I cannot really tell what to say to this whole remark; only that in the first part of it, Madam Dacier is displeased that I do not agree with her, and in the last that I do: but this is a temper which every polite man should overlook in a lady.

To punish my ingratitude, she resolves to expose my blunders: and selects two which I suppose are the most flagrant, out of the many for which she could have chastised me. It happens that the first of these is in part the translator's, and in part her own, without any share of mine: she quotes the end of a sentence, and he puts in French what I never wrote in English: 'Homer (I said) opened a new and boundless walk for his imagination, and created a world for himself in the invention of fable;' which he translates, '*Homere créa pour son usage un monde mouvant, en inventant la fable.*'

Madam Dacier justly wonders at this nonsense in me; and I, in the translator. As to what I meant by Homer's invention of fable, it is afterwards particularly distinguished from that extensive sense in which she took it, by these words: 'If Homer was not the first who introduced the deities (as Herodotus imagines) into the religion of Greece, he seems the first who brought them into a system of machinery for poetry.'

The other blunder she accuses me of is, the mistaking a passage in Aristotle; and she is pleased to send me back to this philosopher's Treatise of Poetry, and to her Preface on the Odyssey, for my better instruction. Now though I am saucy enough to think that one may sometimes differ from Aristotle without blundering, and though I am sure one may sometimes fall into an error by following him servilely; yet I own, that to quote any author for what he never said is a blunder: (but, by the way, to correct an author for what he never said, is somewhat worse than a blunder.) My words were these: 'As there is a greater variety of characters in the Iliad, than in any other poem, so there is of speeches.

Every thing in it has manners, as Aristotle expresses it; that is, every thing is acted or spoken: very little passes in narration.' She justly says, that 'Every thing which is acted or spoken, has not necessarily manners merely because it is acted or spoken.' Agreed: but I would ask the question, whether any thing can have manners which is neither acted nor spoken? If not, then the whole Iliad, being almost spent in speech and action, almost every thing in it has manners; since Homer has been proved before, in a long paragraph of the preface, to have excelled in drawing characters and painting manners: and indeed his whole poem is one continued occasion of showing this bright part of his talent.

To speak fairly, it is impossible she could read even the translation, and take my sense so wrong as she represents it; but I was first translated ignorantly, and then read partially. My expression indeed was not quite exact; it should have been, 'Every thing has manners, as Aristotle calls them.' But such a fault methinks might have been spared: since if one was to look with that disposition she discovers towards me, even on her own excellent writings, one might find some mistakes which no context can redress; as where she makes Eustathius call Cratisthenes the Phliasian, Callisthenes the Physician*. What a triumph might some slips of this sort have afforded to Homer's, her's, and my enemies: from which she was only screened by their happy ignorance? How unlucky had it been, when she insulted Mr. de la Motte for omitting a material passage in the speech† of Helen to Hector, Iliad vi. if some champion for the moderns had by chance understood so much Greek, as to whisper him, that there was no such passage in Homer?

Our concern, zeal, and even jealousy, for our great author's honour were mutual; our endeavours to advance it were equal: and I have as often trembled for it in her hands as she could in mine. It was one of the many reasons I had to wish the longer life of this lady, that I must certainly have regained her good opinion, in spite of all misrepresenting translators whatever. I

* Dacier, Remarques sur le 4^{me} livre de l'Odyss. p. 467.

† De la Corruption Gout.

could not have expected it on any other terms than being approved as great, if not as passionate, an admirer of Homer as herself. For that was the first condition of her favour and friendship: otherwise not one's taste alone, but one's morality, had been corrupted; nor would any man's religion have been unsuspected, who did not implicitly believe in an author whose doctrine is so conformable to Holy Scripture. However, as different people have different ways of expressing their belief, some purely by public and general acts of worship, others by a reverend sort of reasoning and inquiry about the grounds of it, it is the same in admiration; some prove it by exclamations, others by respect. I have observed that the loudest huzzas given to a great man in a triumph, proceed not from his friends, but the rabble; and as I have fancied it the same with the rabble of critics, a desire to be distinguished from them has turned me to the more moderate, and, I hope, more rational method. Though I am a poet, I would not be an enthusiast; and though I am an Englishman, I would not be furiously of a party. I am far from thinking myself that genius, upon whom, at the end of these remarks, Madam Dacier congratulates my country: one capable of correcting Homer, and consequently of reforming mankind, and amending this constitution. It was not to Great Britain this ought to have been applied: since our nation has one happiness for which she might have preferred it to her own, that, as much as we abound in other miserable misguided sects, we have at least none of the blasphemers of Homer. We steadfastly and unanimously believe, both his poem, and our constitution, to be the best that ever human wit invented: that the one is not more incapable of amendment than the other; and (old as they both are) we despise any French or Englishman whatever, who shall presume to retrench, to innovate, or to make the least alteration in either. Far therefore from the genius for which Madam Dacier mistook me, my whole desire is but to preserve the humble character of a faithful translator, and a quiet subject.

C. Whittingham, College House, Chiswick.



8° L. G.

Homer

(Odyssey, 2.)

(1820)

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